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WHAT I SAW AT CASSADAGA LAKE:

A REVIEW

OF THE

SEYBERT COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

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A. B. RICHMOND, Esq.,

A MEMBER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA BAR; AUTHOR OF "LEAVES
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PRISON," "DR. CROSBY'S CALM VIEW FROM A
LAWYER'S STANDPOINT," AND "A HAWK
IN AN EAGLE'S NEST."

"Sir, do all you can to combat the error into which my commissi
have fallen. They were unworthy and unfaithful."

H. SEYBE:

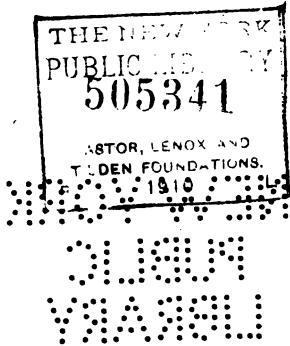
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1888.
R.



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DEDICATION.



To the Members of the Seybert Commission, whose profound researches into the mysteries of Modern Spiritualism; whose scientific investigation with hand-mirrors, printer's-ink and fly-paper; whose *“thorough and impartial investigation of all systems of morals, religion or philosophy which assume to represent the truth, and particularly of Modern Spiritualism”* (so apparent in their Report as to cover them with undying fame, and transmit their names in a halo of glory to the remotest ages of the future); whose keen wit and satire (so appropriately applied, and which for brilliancy will forever rival that of Scott's noted character in *Ivanhoe*, “Wamba, the son of Witless, the son of Weather-brains, who was the son of an alderman”); whose patient labor given in the performance of their arduous duties, without hope of reward, save that which by nature's inevitable laws always follows the acts of the good and the great, have so effectually settled all questions referred to them, and so clearly exposed the fraud and folly of the religious belief of twenty millions of their fellow-men — and whose receipt for making an important product from the gooseberry has been given to the world: — as a mark of unbounded esteem and admiration, this Review is most respectfully dedicated by the

AUTHOR.

WROY WDM
ALBN
VRSBU

INTRODUCTION.

Glen. I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

Hot. Why, so can I, or so can any man;
But will they come when you do call them?"

SHAKESPEARE.

A CURIOSITY like that manifested in Hotspur's question to Glendower, induced me to visit Cassadaga Lake in August last (1887). *Will they come when you do call them?* I had heard a great number of honest and intelligent men and women say that they would, but I did not believe it. In fact, I was not sure that there was a "vasty deep," or any spirits to come when called; and so I visited the lake in a frame of mind very unfavorable to conversion. My experience in the occult world of magic, my knowledge of the manner in which certain deceptions were produced, my success in exposing the jugglery feats of itinerating mountebanks who called themselves "spiritual mediums," gave me great confidence in my own detective skill; and when to all this was superadded the vast amount of useful knowledge I had derived from a careful perusal of the report of the profound investigations of the "Seybert Commission," I felt confident that I could not be deceived by pretended ghost or medium; and as I entered the camp-ground, and saw the great number of visitors there assembled, I smiled a complacent kind of a "Seybert Commission" smile at the weakness and credulity of my fellow-men.

"What fools these mortals be!"

remarked the sage Puck, as he contemplated the vagaries of mankind; this thought of the fairy philosopher passed through my mind as I entered the arched gateway of the beautiful grounds of Cassadaga Lake.

"And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray,"

was my reflection as I made my exit therefrom.

CASSADAGA LAKE

is a beautiful little lake—or, rather, a chain of three lakes, connected by narrow watercourses—situated in Chautauqua County, N.Y. The name is derived from the Seneca Indian dialect, in which it was called *Gus-dā'-go Te-car-ne-o-di*; meaning, *Gus-dā'-go, under the rocks*; *Te-car-ne-o-di, lake*.¹

The assembly ground is situated in a beautiful grove or woodland, and contains forty acres. It is artistically laid out in streets, a number of which are thickly bordered with tasteful cottages. It has a capacious auditorium which will comfortably seat eight hundred persons; and during the summer months, when the association is in session, the ground is filled with a concourse of well-dressed, intelligent people, who go there for pleasure, as well as to hear lectures on spiritual philosophy, and witness the strange sights of the many séances held daily, either in public or in the private rooms of professed mediums. A very pretty little steamer makes trips around the lakes every few hours, mostly accommodating pleasure-seekers who prefer water to "communication with the spirits." A fine hotel has just been completed on the ground, while several others are located on the shore of the lake near by.

On my visit, I was surprised at the class of visitors I met there,—judges of our courts, doctors, lawyers, and learned professors, as well as business men in every condition in life. A fine brass band enlivened the scene with music, while innocent mirth and amusements were judiciously mingled with lectures and other intellectual enjoyments; and yet all was as quiet and orderly as if a perpetual Sabbath reigned within the solemn woods. A large number of intelligent ladies were there, and the voices of happy little children were heard among the trees, making the ancient forest echo with the music of their gladness. It is a charming place,—one well calculated to entice visitations from the spirit world, if such a world exists.

What I saw and heard there induced me to write this little book, which I present to the reader, not as the work of inspiration, neither as a display of erudition, but as a simple narration of facts, and arguments and conclusions drawn therefrom.

¹ See *League of the Ho-de'-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois*, by Lewis H. Morgan, a member of the New York Historical Society; Appendix, p. 1.

Many of my readers perhaps may not thoroughly understand what is meant by the "Seybert Commission." It was formed in accordance with a bequest made by Henry Seybert to the University of Pennsylvania, for certain purposes therein stated. When I addressed my letter to that Commission, I did not know what the terms and conditions of this bequest were, but since then I have obtained a copy of the grant to the University by Mr. Seybert, and I now give it to the public.

To the Board of Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania :

GENTLEMEN: Being mindful of the uncertainty of life at my advanced age, and feeling deeply the importance of making permanent provision for certain interests that seem to me of the highest moment, I hereby offer to your honorable Board fifty 1st Mortgage Bonds, Raleigh and Gaston R. R. (\$1000 each), being equal to the sum of sixty thousand dollars, to be devoted to the maintenance of a chair in the University of Pennsylvania that shall be known as the "Adam Seybert Chair of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy," upon the condition that the incumbent of said chair, either individually, or in conjunction with a commission of the University faculty, shall make a thorough and impartial investigation of all systems of morals, religion or philosophy which assume to represent the truth, and particularly of Modern Spiritualism.

I further empower your Board to invest the said sum of money in such securities, strictly legal or otherwise, as may be deemed best, provided that at all times the interest alone shall be expended for the purpose of maintaining the said Adam Seybert Chair.

I further empower your Board, in case there may be any income arising from said sum of money over and above the amount required for the salary of the incumbent of said Chair, to dispose of such excess of income in such way as may be deemed best to promote the views I have expressed. I have the honor to remain,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

HENRY SEYBERT.

My readers will observe that the condition on which this generous donation was made is to secure a "*thorough and impartial investigation, etc.,—particularly of Modern Spiritualism.*" All the donor asked in return for his \$60,000 was that the investigation should be "*thorough and impartial.*" Has this been done? If not, does not common honesty require it at the hands of the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania? I have no doubt of the probity of their intentions, in doing what has already been accomplished; but is their work completed? Have they

complied with the requirements of the bequest? If they have not, their task is not yet ended; and the money does not belong to them, either in law or equity, until the intention of the donor is fully complied with.

Unkind sneers and sarcasm at the cherished belief of Henry Seybert is a poor return for the princely gift; and that feature alone, so prominent in the Report of the Commissioners, should have impelled the Trustees to reject it, as unworthy of them and the institution they represent.

But the report has been made, and published to the world; and to review its honesty, its truthfulness, its "*thoroughness*," and its "*impartiality*," this little book is written. I am well aware that it will be the subject of many unkind criticisms; yet while malice may be thus gratified, the claims of justice will still remain unanswered.

So much has been said and written on so-called "modern spiritualism" that I do not expect to be able to present any new facts or theories, or even ideas on the phenomena claimed by its advocates or believers. The subject has generally been expounded from two standpoints, — either that of actual or pretended inspiration by mediums or trance speakers or writers; or that of scientists who have investigated it thoroughly and learnedly. I do not refer to the Seybert Commissioners, as their report, to my mind, is neither the one nor the other. Surely inspiration did not direct their investigations; and science would hesitate long ere it claimed them as its own.

When alleged inspiration has spoken or written, both style and matter have been somewhat stilted, and vastly too ethereal for the ordinary comprehension of mankind; when science has attempted to lend its aid in solving the mysterious problems, the explanation has been too learned or abstruse to be well understood by the average hearer or reader. The "seven spheres" of Dr. Hare, and the "fourth dimension of space" of Professor Zöllner, are alike almost incomprehensible to the ordinary enquirer.

In my review I propose to pursue, as far as possible, a middle course. I am accustomed to jury trials and investigations in our courts, where all controverted issues are solved and decided by human testimony and its circumstantial auxiliaries; where the evidence of credible witnesses is believed, and relied upon as proof *of the facts they relate*. I propose, then, to make the public my

jury, to call my witnesses, refer to the laws, both civil and natural, argue the case exactly as a lawyer would in a court of justice, and ask for a verdict, only when the jury believes from "preponderating testimony" that I am entitled to one. I have no more interest in the issue involved than has my reader; therefore I may reasonably expect a candid and just verdict. I am well aware that a zealous advocate often convinces himself of the justice of his cause, even when he fails to so convince his jury, and it may be so in my case; yet as I have nothing to lose if the verdict is against me, neither to gain if it is in my favor, I will endeavor to try the cause conscientiously and argue it fairly from the evidence produced, and the *laws* involved in the issue.

Of my experience at Cassadaga Lake, I can say in the exact language of an eminent scientist, Professor De Morgan: "I have both seen and heard, in a manner which would make unbelief impossible, things called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. *So far I feel the ground firm under me*; but when it comes to what is the cause of these phenomena, I find I cannot adopt any explanation which has yet been suggested. The physical explanations which I have seen are easy, but miserably insufficient; the spiritual hypothesis is *sufficient*, but ponderously difficult."

"It is," as Professor William Crookes says, "very difficult to be sure of facts, then to ascertain conditions, next laws. The pseudo-scientific spiritualist professes to know everything: no calculations trouble his serenity, no hard experiments, no long, laborious readings; no weary attempts to make clear in words that which has rejoiced the heart and elevated the mind. He talks glibly of all sciences and arts, overwhelming the enquirer with terms like 'electro-biologize,' 'psychology,' 'animal magnetism,' etc.,—a mere play upon words, showing ignorance rather than understanding. Popular science such as this is little able to guide discovery rushing onwards to an unknown future; and the real workers of science must be extremely careful not to allow the reins to get into unfit and incompetent hands."

All this is true as to the *explanation* of facts; yet there are many things which can be seen and known by the man of average intelligence, as well as by the learned scientist. Surely any *persons of ordinary intelligence* can testify from the evidence

of their senses—from what they see, and feel, and hear, and smell—as well as a savant. The most important causes in our courts are tried and decided upon human testimony. I have seen life and death oscillating in the judicial balance; neither seemed to preponderate, when the evidence of a little child ten years of age was thrown into the scale of life, and it prevailed. The man was saved from an ignominious death, and after-developed facts sustained the testimony of the little girl which had prevented a judicial murder.

Surely a man of average mind can tell with certainty whether he held two slates in such a position, and under such conditions that another person present could not write on them without his knowing it. If it is not so, then are all the ordinary methods by which we obtain knowledge fallacious, and the facts in life that we can be certain of are few indeed. Of course we are all liable to be deceived even in the most ordinary transactions, yet nature did not intend that our senses should be *false* witnesses, but truthful; and the instances where they testify falsely to us, compared with the millions of truths they tell us every day of our lives, are as a single grain of sand to the accumulation of an ocean's shore, or a single leaf to the foliage of a forest.

There are many skeptics in this world who seem to *prefer* to believe “a probable lie, to an improbable truth,”—La Rochefoucauld said that it was more politic to do so,—and there are also many savants whose obstinate incredulity will not permit them to see what is plainly visible to all others. “*Oculos habent et non vident*”; though gifted with vision, they are nevertheless blind. With either of the above classes in the jury box I should not expect a verdict. This review is not written to convince those who would not think if they could, or could not if they would. But I appeal to the average common sense of the public; to that great class of men who do not ignore the evidence of their senses, and who do not discredit, without cause, the testimony of their fellows. But with the man of whom Solomon speaks in his proverbs, who is “wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason,” I have no controversy; this review is not written to convince him! I sent a copy of my letters, with a photograph of the H. Seybert Communication to the chairman of the Seybert Commission. I received a very polite letter from him notifying me that it had been received;—

“Only this; nothing more.”

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CASSADAGA LAKE—BEFORE THE CAMP-GROUNDS WERE OCCUPIED BY THE ASSOCIATION.

L. W. LAW, N. Y. STATE

It is evident the facts I related did not correspond with their theory; but, of course, "it is so much the worse for the facts." Every scientist knows that when a favorite theory is adopted by an investigator, and afterwards it is discovered that facts do not sustain it, the facts *must* give way. If it were not so, what would become of many of the pet creeds of the great and good of to-day? It must be obvious to all thinking minds that Thomas L. Harris, in his *Lyric of the Golden Age*, made a great mistake when he wrote, —

"The simplest peasant who observes a truth,
And from a fact deduces principle,
Adds solid treasure to the public wealth.
The theorist who dreams a rainbow dream,
And calls hypothesis philosophy,
At best is but a paper financier,
Who palms his specious promises for gold.
Facts are the basis of philosophy;
Philosophy the harmony of facts
Seen in their right relation."

In an address delivered before the British Association in 1871, Sir William Thomson — one of the ablest scientists in Scotland — said, "Science is bound by the everlasting law of honour to face fearlessly every problem which can fairly be presented to it;" — and in presenting this review to the public, I desire to present to the scientific educator of public opinion, as well as to the ordinary reader, a few facts for what they are worth; and in the language of William Crookes, F.R.S., I desire to say: —

"Remember I hazard no hypothesis or theory whatever; I merely vouch for certain facts, my only object being *truth*. It will not do merely to deny their existence, or try to sneer them down. Doubt, but do not deny; try the experiments; investigate with care and patience. If, having examined, you discover imposture or delusion, proclaim it, *and say how it was done*. But if you find a fact, avow it fearlessly, as, 'by the everlasting law of honour,' you are bound to do."

Reader, should you investigate — even as superficially as I have done — and discover facts you cannot explain, don't be afraid of that arrant demagogue, public opinion; should you detect fraud, do not act like the members of the Seybert Com-

mission, who, when they had had divulged to them how certain so-called spirit manifestations were performed by accomplished jugglers, refused to tell the public how they were done, but, like the mother of Brian the wizard, of the *Lady of the Lake*, seemed determined

"To lock their secrets in their breast,
And die in travail unconfessed."

All newly discovered scientific facts belong to the world, and should be published, for thereby mankind is benefited and civilization advanced; all frauds discovered should be proclaimed, for thereby is mankind protected from delusion. And the investigator who discovers, and then conceals, either a fact or a fraud, is unworthy of public confidence.

In these days when men think for themselves, it will not do for the Seybert Commissioners to sneer and cry "humbug," and expect the world to accept their "hue and cry" as conclusive evidence on the facts they were paid to investigate by the Seybert bequest. To say "We know how it is done, but won't tell" is both childish and dishonest, and naturally leads thinking men to doubt their capability or their honesty. Their report is now before the jury of the world, and on the evidence of its truth or falsity it will be judged—condemned or approved.

To assist in the trial of this cause these pages are written,
"WITH MALICE TOWARDS NONE AND CHARITY FOR ALL."

WHAT I SAW AT CASSADAGA LAKE.

CHAPTER I.

“Oh! . . . that mine adversary had written a book.”

Job xxxi. 35.

THERE must have been newspaper reporters and critics in the days of the much afflicted Job; else why his unkind and somewhat ungracious wish?

After my visit to Cassadaga Lake the newspapers “took me up,” and published a number of my experiences there. “One spake after this manner, and another spake after that manner”—some of them nearly right, a few of them nearly all wrong;—therefore I was induced to write an open letter to the Seybert Commissioners, as it were in self-defence, to tell the public what I actually did see; and now for the same reason I am impelled to write this more lengthy review of their Report.

After my letter had been published, it was very amusing to observe the manner in which it was received by my friends and acquaintances, and the various explanations they gave me to account for the phenomena I had witnessed. Some of those who interviewed me seemed to be lineal descendants of Israel’s wisest king, and evidently thought that they had inherited all of their ancestor’s mental estate. These “heirs of entail” all knew that I could not have seen what I *knew* I did see; and if I had, that it could all be explained by “*unconscious cerebration*,” “*odid force*,” “*electricity*,” or “*magnetism*”; that I was *unconsciously* “*psychologized*,” or “*mesmerized*”; or that

under a sort of mania or delusion, I imagined I saw phenomena that could not possibly have happened. And when I, with becoming modesty, enquired if I could not with safety believe the evidence of my senses, the answer of one intellectual prodigy was:—

“No! No!! certainly not. Our senses are most deceptive and untruthful witnesses.” And he sagely remarked by way of illustration: “How often have you met a person that you were confident you knew very well, when, on approaching him, you discovered your mistake, and that he was an entire stranger to you? And as to other phenomena—such as answering questions by the medium—that is only ‘mind-reading,’ or ‘*unconscious cerebration.*’ Dr. Carpenter, a celebrated English physiologist, has explained all that in a most convincing manner; and,” he continued in a tone of commiseration, “I am very sorry that you should be deceived by the greatest humbug of the day.”

I staggered under this intellectual blow; and just as I had partially recovered from it, another member of the ancient Hebrew family came up. This man was not a *lineal* descendant of Solomon, but was related to him through some distant collateral branch of the family; however, he had inherited all the family traits of character—saving the “trifling matter of wisdom.” He informed me, in most concise and emphatic language, that it was all—nonsense; that such things could not be; that it was legerdemain; that the medium “fooled me”; that he was most particularly astonished that they could deceive *me* as they did;—and he smiled so pityingly that it hurt my sensitive feelings through and through, and I went home a sadder, if not a wiser, man.

As soon as I had sufficiently recovered from the shock my nervous organization had received from the two *assaults and batteries* I have just described, I again ven-

tured to go to my office. Soon thereafter a most valued and esteemed friend called on me ; — he is a man of great learning and intellectual ability, honest, and thoroughly conscientious ; and he could not but believe that I had been deceived. He informed me that the magicians of London had most successfully duplicated all the so-called “ spiritual manifestations,” and that it was all a fraud. Now I esteem the Doctor very highly ; but not having time then to make a lengthy explanation to him, I deferred it to some future occasion. I knew that he was sincere. I knew that he thought as many do who have not investigated, and as I did a few weeks before, and I respected his disbelief.

A few days after, the heir-at-law of all of Solomon’s wisdom — the one who placed so little confidence in the evidence of his senses — called on me to receive some money I had collected for him. He walked into my office, extended his hand most cordially and asked me if I had collected his claim.

I looked at him with an expression of half recognition, and said, —

“ Excuse me, sir ; what is your name ? ”

The look of unbounded surprise on his face was very, very ludicrous. He evidently thought that the attack of mental aberration that had seized me at Cassadaga Lake had culminated.

“ Why ! ” said he, “ don’t you know me ? ”

I replied that I thought I did, but that I was convinced that “ our senses were most deceptive and untruthful witnesses,” and that there were so many disreputable persons in the world who would take advantage of that weakness in mankind, that, when I paid out money, it became necessary for me, as a lawyer, to be very careful. I admitted that I thought he was the person he represented *himself to be*, yet recent events had satisfied me that I

could not trust my senses; and that he would have to prove his identity by incontrovertible evidence before I should feel safe in paying him the money.

I offered my friend a cigar, and we sat down and talked the matter over. In reply to my question, —

“How am I to know that you are the person you represent yourself to be?” — he replied: —

“Well, if you doubt the evidence of your sense of sight, I will appeal to your inner consciousness. Don’t you remember, once upon a time, when we were young men, etc.” Here he related a circumstance of our youth, which I am very glad was only known to ourselves. “There,” said he, “now are you not certain that I am the person I represent myself to be?”

I replied that I would have been a few days before, but that I had recently read an essay of the celebrated physiologist, Dr. Carpenter, on “*Unconscious Cerebration*,” and that according to the very lucid theory of the Doctor, I was not certain but that the incident he had just related was an instance of that wonderful phenomenon; that while it was true that I had tried my best to forget the occurrence, yet, to use the language of the learned Doctor, the “*residua*” of the impressions it made on my memory at the time yet remained, and that he only read my mind, while I might never have seen him before. However, as I felt reasonably confident that he actually was my old friend, I paid him the money on his solemn promise to visit Cassadaga Lake next summer just to see how I had been deceived. I sincerely wish the Seybert Commission would add his name to their respectable body. He is now in a condition of mind to fully appreciate their “*gooseberry joke*,” and to most heartily endorse their report.

The evident anxiety of my “street sidewalk” friends *as to my mental condition*, set me to thinking and read-

ing. I read the history of Professor Zöllner's experiments ; of Professor William Crookes's thorough and searching investigations ; of my old friend Professor Hare's wonderful experience ; the report of the Committee of the Dialectical Society of London ; then the investigations of a number of eminent scientists, both in Europe and America, all of whom became thoroughly convinced of the existence of the phenomena attributed to spiritualism ; then I turned to Johnson's *Universal Cyclopædia*, Vol. III. p. 922, and under the title of "Odic Force" I read the following :—

"It has received the synonym '*psychic force*,' from Crookes, who performed several startling experiments with Home the Spiritualist, Sergeant Cox, and others. A lever thirty-six inches long was fastened one end to the wall, and upon this a heavy man sat. Home held the tips of his fingers against a distant end of the board, and the board retained its horizontal position, meanwhile supporting the person who sat upon it. Several equally wonderful performances were shown to a number of intelligent and honest people, who authenticated the report of Crookes and others, etc."

I then read from an old encyclopædia an account of the phenomena that attended the Wesley family, — as reported by Parson Wesley, the father of John, — with many other authorities as to the existence of the phenomena in various parts of the world ; together with the many private letters which I have received from all over the United States, as well as two from England, giving accounts of the personal experiences of the writers ; and, added to this, the testimony of many reputable personal friends, as well as the evidence of my own senses. Now, whenever I hear a person deny the existence of the phenomena, the thought always occurs to me that he could successfully contend for the belt of Ananias, or becomingly wear the *auricular appendages* of Midas. It does not seem possi-

ble that any candid enquirer can read the evidence of the hundreds of eminent men who have witnessed the phenomena — whatever they may be, but claimed by Spiritualists as “spirit visitations” — and not become thoroughly convinced of their existence. There is not one historical fact of past centuries that is, or can be proven by more indubitable evidence than that of the occurrence of the manifestations of an unseen, intelligent force. So far, “I feel the ground safe under me,” and fearlessly stand thereon, defying logic or legerdemain to disprove it. What that force is, from whence it derives its power, knowledge, and intelligence, I do not pretend to know, — more than I know from whence comes, and what is chemical affinity, or gravity, or that force that moves the celestial orrery in its vast evolutions of power and harmony.

Since I wrote my open letter to the Seybert Commission, I have given the matter much thought and investigation, by reading the evidence of others, and am now more convinced that “*twice two is four*” than I was when I left the grounds of Cassadaga Lake.

I mailed a copy of my communication to the chairman of the Seybert Commission, who politely acknowledged the receipt thereof. I have heard nothing from them since. I suppose my trifling experience weighed nothing with them, compared with their ludicrous and laborious investigations.

They evidently believe that they have settled the vexed questions as to “so-called spirit manifestations” forever; and what more is required of them by the Seybert bequest?

My letter only contains an imperfect description of *all* I saw and *heard* at Cassadaga Lake, yet I now offer it as evidence, in opening my case to the jury.

AN OPEN LETTER
TO THE SEYBERT COMMISSION.

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

Gentlemen of the Seybert Commission :

My excuse for addressing to you this open letter will be found in the communication itself. I read with pleasure your report, and as it corresponded in every respect with my preconceived opinions on the subject of SPIRITUALISM, I enjoyed very much the undercurrent of sarcasm that runs through its well-worded pages, and yet I am afraid that

“Though it may make the unskilful laugh, it cannot but make the judicious grieve.”

I fear me, gentlemen, that your wit has much impaired the candor of your report. I do not for one moment doubt either your honesty or your ability in the investigation, yet in the light of my own experience and the evidence of scores of good, intelligent men and women who saw much more than I did, I cannot but believe that your mission is not yet ended, and that your duty to the dead as well as the living is not yet fully performed.

Henry Seybert left a generous legacy to a most worthy institution and to mankind; and most faithfully should the conditions of his bequest be executed. I sincerely believe, gentlemen, that you desire to perform your duty in the sacred trust imposed upon you, and that you will faithfully continue to investigate until either a great truth is proclaimed to the world, or a great fraud exposed and held up to the deserved contempt and execration of mankind.

As I am to appear as a witness before you, it renders it necessary for me to give you some information of myself. I do this unwillingly; yet, as I am a stranger to all of you, it seems proper that you should know something of my antecedents, that you may better determine the weight of my evidence. In brief, then, — I was educated a surgeon and physician; for a number of years I lectured on chemistry and physiology — read law and *have practised* my profession nearly forty years. In 1853, while

I was assistant-director of the machinery department in the New York Crystal Palace, I became intimately acquainted with Herr Anderson, the great magician. I assisted him with my knowledge of chemistry, electricity and magnetism, in preparing some of his feats of magic, and in return I became an *amateur* pupil of his and learned all his secrets in the *occult* science of magic. Many times I have been appointed on committees to expose the so-called spiritual manifestations of itinerant mediums. In every instance in which I have been thus employed, I have believed that all of the pretended spiritual manifestations I have witnessed were frauds. These facts made me a disbeliever in what is called "Modern Spiritualism," and when I visited Cassadaga Lake I presumed that all I would see would be a repetition of old frauds clothed in a new dress.

An intimate friend of mine, who is one of the ablest members of our bar, visited Cassadaga Lake in August last; on his return he showed me a slate communication purporting to be addressed to me from one now dead, who in life was very dear to me. My friend related the manner in which he received it. I knew him to be truthful and intelligent, and what he said induced me to visit the Lake. I knew him to be a good lawyer, but unskilled in the feats of legerdemain, and I thought he had been deceived. To detect this deception I made my pilgrimage to this noted Mecca of Spiritualism, and I came away more astonished than was my friend. In brief, my experience was as follows:—

On the beautiful grounds of "Lily Dale" I found a concourse of intelligent, thoughtful men and women who seemed to be seeking for the truth only. They were earnest and sincere. The spirit of speculation had not as yet entered their camp-ground, except it may be in the forms of numerous mediums whose notices I observed on many of the cottages as I passed along. I saw and heard many things that to my untutored wisdom seemed the very acme of absurd credulity. The evening after my arrival, while seated on the porch of the hotel, I listened with astonishment to the conversation of numbers of ladies and gentlemen as

"Each told the uncocs they had seen and heard."

I wondered that credulity could go so far; I had read your report, gentlemen, and I knew how all the frauds were perpetrated. It is true your testimony was only human, but it was *re-enforced* by my *own* experience, and I smiled at the other

human testimony I there heard. It did not occur to me that it was just possible that even your wisdom and mine might be at fault, and that we had not seen all that was to be seen on the unknown boundaries of a future world, if such boundaries actually exist. The next day I visited a slate-writing medium.

The room I entered from the street was well lighted, the windows and doors being open. The medium entered; I recognized a gentleman to whom I had been introduced the afternoon before at the hotel, and who of course had had an opportunity of learning of me and mine, if he had so desired in view of my probable visit to him. Without taking time to describe all the details of the "*séance*," I will briefly say, that at his direction I wrote six interrogatories on separate pieces of paper, folded and rolled them up into a small compass and laid them on the table before me—a rude pine center table with a single board top—no framework about it, no mortises or slots in which to hold the slates, as you describe in your report. I had purchased two slates at a store on the grounds. I marked them and cleaned them myself, and keeping them in my hands, awaited coming events with an incredulity increased from reading your exhaustive report. The medium entered the room, seated himself opposite me at the other side of the table; a number of slate pencils lay on the table, from one of which he broke a piece about the size of a No. 4 shot; I opened the slates, he laid the fragment of pencil on the bottom slate, I covered it with the other, and with my hands grasped the ends of the slates, holding them together. From the pellets of paper on which I had written the interrogatories I selected one, holding it in my right hand. I myself did not know which of the questions I held, and as they had remained as I placed them on the table, closely watched by me all the time, I do not see how it is possible that the medium could have known the question written on the one in my hand. All looked so very silly and absurd that I felt ashamed of my own folly, and was only comforted with the thought of how soon I would detect the fraud as you had done, when the dénouement came. It came in a few moments, but not as I expected. I held the slates above the table, in open daylight, firmly grasping their ends. The medium reached forth his hand and placed the ends of his fingers under the slate frames, with his thumb above it. I closely watched the *flexors and extensors* of his hand. There was no movement. Soon I

heard the pencil move between the slates, and distinctly I heard it write. I lowered my head and raised the slates close to my face; I traced the movement of the pencil from my left to right, but from the medium's right to left. The pencil wrote with about the velocity of an ordinary writer. Soon the pencil ceased to move; the medium removed his fingers; I opened the slates and saw a communication on the lower one that nearly covered its surface. I read it; opened the paper in my hand, and the communication was an intelligent answer to that interrogatory; the writing *not unlike* the familiar hand of the one to whom I had addressed the question and whose name was signed to the communication. On my return home I compared it with the communication given me by my friend, the attorney spoken of — which had been written over a week before. The two were apparently in the same handwriting and purported to be from the same person.

Gentlemen, I was surprised. My boasted skill in legerdemain availed me naught. I had been deceived. My own experience, aided by your report, had told me this could not be done. With yet more care I placed the clean slate below the other, dropped the fragment of pencil in the center, covered it with the other slate, took another paper pellet from the table, grasped the slates with determination, the medium being at least five feet from me, and when thus prepared, with my watchfulness increased to a point of almost painful intensity, I told him to proceed. Again he took the frames of the slates between his thumb and fingers, and instantly I again heard the pencil write. This time the communication was much shorter than the former one. I opened the slates and saw in a woman's handwriting a communication with a signature appended. I opened the pellet in my hand, and the interrogatory therein contained was to the one whose name was written on the slate. Gentlemen of the Commission, how was it done? I do not know; but this I do know, it was not the feat of a magician! There is no professor of the occult science of magic living, no one ever did live, that could by virtue of his art alone cause an inanimate fragment of stone to write an intelligent sentence under the circumstances I have narrated. The unlearned might believe that electricity or magnetism was the motive power, and that this was in some mysterious manner evolved from the medium, or from some *device concealed either in the room or on his person.* But you,

gentlemen, know better; you know that a piece of slate pencil is not and cannot be affected by magnetism, and besides, if this was possible, as the writing appeared on the inside surface of the slate, and as the medium sat opposite me, he must have written from his right to his left, and to him not only backwards, but *wrong end up*, and through the slate.

Now, gentlemen, you do not believe that this is possible. You think I was deceived; that the slates were changed in my very sight, in open broad daylight; that my grasp was unloosened from them without my knowing it; that other slates with the "*long communication previously prepared*" were substituted, and that I, in the full possession of my senses, did not know it. Gentlemen, you are mistaken! My credulity might permit me to believe in ghosts, — which it never did, — but not that. We must find some other explanation. Perhaps we had better fall back on that myth of *Reichenbach, odic force*.

The next day I visited two other mediums. With the first I obtained no results. He said he was not well, and after sitting at the table with my slates for a half-hour the pencil refused to write. As the fee of the medium always depended on his obtaining a communication, it occurred to me that — as legerdemain always works — as it does not depend upon the nervous condition of the performer, but on surroundings always under his control, the medium sustained an unnecessary loss. I do not understand why he did not perform and secure his fee. Gentlemen, is it possible that the result is not always under the control of the medium? If so, then it cannot be magic, but must depend upon some unknown natural law.

I had purchased two new slates and put a private mark on their frames. With them I visited a third medium. When I arrived at his cottage he was engaged in his room up stairs with two other sitters. While standing in front of and near to his cottage I had a conversation with several gentlemen in relation to your report; *possibly* the medium might have heard what I said, but *probably* he did not. I said nothing unkind of you, gentlemen, but stated that the "slate writing" as you described it was not as I saw it; that I intended to write you my experience and ask you to investigate farther. I went into the cottage, and on the stairs met a gentleman and his wife who had just been engaged with the medium in a séance. They had received a communication written in German, and signed with the name

of the father of one of them, who died in Germany twenty years before. They told me that they had held the slates as I have described in my own case. One of the slates was written full, and in *German*, and I am informed by those who are well acquainted with the medium that he can neither read, write nor speak that language.

I entered the room. The medium was seated at a common, cheap, pine top table. If he was in that room while I was talking with the gentleman in front of the cottage, he could not have heard what I had said about your commission. I took a seat near the table, holding my slates in my hands. I was determined that this time I would not be deceived, and as you have informed the public in your report how these communications are written, I knew what to expect. I did not have a mirror, as one of your number had when he saw the medium "write on the slate under the table," but I determined that my slates should not for a moment leave my hand, and they did not. I took four pieces of paper and wrote the names of four persons who were dead. I folded the papers and held them in my left hand. The medium did not see the names—he could not have done so. The medium bit off a small piece of slate pencil, and I placed it on my lower slate, which I knew was clean at the time, and covered it with the other; next I tied my handkerchief around the slates. Up to this time the medium had not touched them; he was on the opposite side of the table. Then I grasped the slates firmly, holding them against my person. This was in broad daylight; the windows and door of the room were open. I then took one of the slips of paper from my left hand and held it in my right. I did not know the name on the paper I thus held, and the medium could not have known it. He then moved close to the table, reached across it and placed the ends only of his fingers beneath the slate frame and his thumb on top. In an instant the slates began to pull away from me as if the medium was trying to get them into his possession. Warned by your experience, gentlemen, I held on to the slates with all my strength, and it was with the utmost difficulty that I retained possession of them. They were violently jerked from right to left, then toward the medium. All the while I watched his thumb and fingers. They seemed to be holding the slate frames but loosely. I do not know but that the medium could pull more with his thumb and fingers than I could with both

hands, but I don't believe it, yet the slates were very nearly wrenched from my hands. I asked the medium what this meant. He replied, "Another influence is present and is trying to take the slates away from the influence of the one whose name you hold in your right hand. He says he is a stranger to you, but that he must and will communicate with you." I replied, "Let him come! I do not care whose ghost it is, only so that it makes the pencil between these slates write an intelligent sentence. A column of the multiplication*table will answer my purpose just as well as a communication from a spirit. Let the pencil write!" In a moment the slates quieted down and became motionless, and instantly I heard the pencil commence to write: it was but a moment and all was still. I moved back out of reach of the medium, opened the slates, and there, written in a distinct, business-like hand, was the following communication, which I have had photographed, and with this letter I send a copy to the *Tribune-Republican* for your inspection and use:—

"DEAR SIR: Do all you can to combat the error into which my commissioners have fallen. They were — (this word is indistinct) and unfaithful.
H. SEYBERT."

Gentlemen, I do not by any means endorse the sentiment of this communication. I do not believe that you were either "unworthy" or "unfaithful" in your report, but I know you are mistaken in your explanation of the "slate-writing communications."

I have never seen any of Mr. Seybert's handwriting. I do not know that the communication resembles it in the least, neither do I care. What I wish to know is what power moved the pencil? What intelligence directed it? Those familiar with "slate communications" say that often they come in the exact handwriting of the person whose name is signed to them, yet not always so; that the medium is but, as it were, a "type-writer" moved by spirit fingers, yet affected by other surrounding influences, such as peculiar physical and mental idiosyncrasies and temperaments. It is said that many such communications have been received from those who died in infancy and of course could have had no characteristic handwriting. I know nothing of all this, and can only form an opinion from human evidence—alas! so often fallacious.

That I was astonished at what I saw when I parted the slates

is but a faint expression of my emotions. How had I been deceived? I could not believe it possible. It certainly was not in the manner you describe, and you must look farther for the cause than you have in your investigation.

I then placed the clean slate below the other, laid the pencil thereon, covered it with the other slate, and again grasped them in my hands. I did not tie my handkerchief around them this time, but held them firmly. I know the slate was clean when I placed the pencil on it. I took every possible precaution. I know the slates were mine, with my private mark on them. I know they were in my grasp all the time. Again I heard the pencil move, and heard it write a few words and stop. I opened the slates, found written thereon these words: "'Tis true, God bless you," and signed with the name written on the paper in my right hand, and I did not know myself the name I had taken from my left hand until after the communication was made.

Now, gentlemen, I have written you a plain, truthful statement of my experience at Cassadaga Lake. I know I saw what I have stated, and that I have related it as I saw it, but I do not know how it was done. There is no magician living that can do what I saw done, with the aid of his art alone. My experience was but that of one among hundreds still more wonderful, which were related to me by honest, intelligent men and women, whose testimony would be conclusive in a cause being tried in any court in our country.

On page 8 of your report you say, "The long messages are prepared by the medium before the séance. The short ones, answers to questions asked during the séance, are written under the table, with what skill practice can confer. The slate with its message already written must in some way be substituted for one which the sitter knows to be clean. The short answers must be written under trying circumstances, out of sight, *under the table*, with all the motions of the arm or hand concealed."

Gentlemen, you are mistaken. It is not done the way you describe. The slates are not changed, they are not placed under the table. They do not for a moment leave the sight or hand of the sitter, and to all appearance an inanimate fragment of stone performs an intelligent act without the aid of human hands. How is it done? An expectant public awaits your answer.

It is just possible, after all, that these crude and unsatisfactory manifestations may be faint "footprints on the boundaries of a

future world." Is there anything in the philosophy of life or the mysteries of death that denies the possibility of spiritual visitations to this earth? I know that in a history deemed sacred by the Christian world we have the narration of a number of wonderful events which, if true, afford evidence — strong "as proof of holy writ" — that such visitations did occur. The episode in the life of Saul, when he conversed with the spirit of his old friend, Samuel. The angel that rolled back the stone from "the tomb." "The young man clothed in long white garments" that Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James saw sitting on the right side of the sepulchre. The angel that came to the prison of Peter, broke off his fetters, opened his prison doors, and swung back the iron gates. Of the one that visited Paul and Silas while in prison, and the one that talked with Zacharias and with Mary. The voice at the baptism of Christ. The heavenly host singing over the plains of Judea, and the scene at the Mount of Transfiguration, as well as the voice that cried, "Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me?" Although these events occurred long centuries ago, yet in Him who sits on high there is no change; what He has once permitted may again come to pass. If human testimony from the bedside of dying Christians is to be believed, even to-day how often have the pains of death been assuaged by the welcome voices of those that have gone before, while the fluttering of angels' wings has been heard by ears growing dull and cold in death. Why may it not be that in the progress of intellectual development man is approaching nearer and yet nearer to the presence of his Creator, until he may at last hear the whispering voices of the living dead? Surely our revered religion would have nothing to fear from this evidence. It would be auxiliary to the Christian belief, confirm many a wavering faith, and smooth many a pillow of death. I tell you, gentlemen, there is no comfort in doubts of the future. The life that has no Christian faith in it is cold and cheerless indeed. But all men do not have this faith. That which is evidence to one mind fails to convince another. How priceless then, beyond all the wealth of earth, would be that evidence which would demonstrate to doubting minds the fact that the loved ones by whose graves they stand "are not dead, but sleeping!"

Now understand me, gentlemen, I do not say that the manifestations I saw came from the spirit world — if there is such a world (?), but I do say that I do not believe that they were feats of legerdemain.

On page 68 of your report you speak of "a very remarkable slate-writing experiment which a Mr. Kellar has performed," etc. I do not know what Mr. Kellar can do, but I do know what he cannot do by virtue of his skill as a conjurer; *i.e.*, he cannot make a fragment of stone placed between two slates which I hold in my hands write an intelligent sentence. So far I defy him or any other living magician. He cannot perform the experiments I witnessed. If he thinks he can, I would be pleased to become the victim of his deception. Let him try! I have seen nothing in my short and imperfect investigation that demonstrates a spirit life,—I sincerely wish I had,—but I have seen that done which cannot be explained by any known law of nature, and in this I am not alone. Scientists, the latchet of whose shoes you and I are unworthy to loose, have seen the like and been unable to explain it, and you, gentlemen, will have to look farther than you can with a "pocket mirror" ere you solve the problem.

Is there such a power as "*Odic force*"? or is it, like the Scandinavian god of northern mythology, *Odin*, from which it is supposed the term is derived, a myth, a baseless fabric of a dream that exists only in the imagination of men?

I do not question the fact that you have discovered frauds, as you narrate, yet no science has ever been investigated, no theory of religion developed, but in their path truth and error have walked side by side, yet the footprints of error never yet obliterated the pathway of truth. Of course there are hundreds of false or spurious manifestations of spirit life, not alone in so-called Spiritualism, but even the religion of the Christian world has for hundreds of years been tainted with these frauds and deceptions. The minister of our revered religion would have a hopeless task to perform, who, in his advocacy of the truth of the miracles of the Saviour, was compelled to combat and explain the hundreds of false miracles that were performed by the priesthood of past centuries. Dr. Isaac Taylor says that: "From the period of the Nicene Council and onward miracles of the most astounding kind were alleged to be wrought from day to day"—and to reason that the falsehood of these pretended miracles tainted with fraud those performed by the Saviour is a *non sequitur*—so plain that he is little skilled in logic and has less common sense who does not see it.

Gentlemen of the Seybert Commission: Of course I may have

been deceived. I certainly did not have a pocket mirror in my investigations, and perhaps therein lies my weakness; yet as I held the slates myself, as they were not out of my grasp for one moment, and certainly not under the table or out of my sight, or in the hands of the medium, I do not see that a looking-glass is an important factor in the solution of the mystery.

Your report, gentlemen, touches a belief dear to thousands. That belief is spreading rapidly. It is not based upon faith alone, but on what its votaries believe to be positive demonstration. Henry Seybert was a firm believer in its truth, and with a generosity that puts to shame much of the bigotry of the world, he made a generous bequest to enable you to thoroughly test its truth. Although he was an ardent believer in Spiritualism, yet he left a large sum of money to cause an investigation which might destroy the very foundations of his cherished belief. He did not leave the thousands of dollars (I do not know how many) to propagate his creed as many wealthy devotees of the various Christian churches have done; but with the desire only that his fellow-men might know the truth of "*all systems of moral religion or philosophy which assume to represent the truth, and particularly of Modern Spiritualism.*" No more generous, unselfish act was ever done by philanthropic Christians. No pet creed was to be propagated, no favorite theory to be established, no falsehood to be shielded; but truth, that emanation from the throne of eternal justice, was what he desired you to seek. Gentleman, have you completed your task? Have you found it? Remember your investigations will affect the happiness of many. Your wit and sarcasm, while it is covert, is all the more cruel. It is pointed at the religious belief of those who need not bend the knee to you in honesty of purpose, conscientiousness of action, or intelligence of opinions. Those who would not willingly deceive themselves in so important a matter as "*the evidence of a future life,*" to them the ground on which you stand is holy ground; on it are gathered all those they loved in life and mourned in death, and a decent respect for the feelings, as well as the opinions of your fellow-men, should silence your wit, smother your sarcasm, and prompt you to perform your duty as becomes thoughtful, earnest, Christian men.

Gentlemen, will you please turn to pages 125, 126, and 127 of your report. Read them. Do you think they accord with either the dignity or responsibility of your position?

It may be that the believers in spiritual manifestations are in error — and I confess that *I fear they are*; yet until you can explain all the phenomena that attend their séances on the theory of fraud, you are not entitled to a verdict. The frauds you have discovered only go so far as *they* are concerned. Remember that the daughter of Jairus *was* raised from the dead, notwithstanding the spurious miracles that were performed during the middle ages.

In conclusion, gentlemen, let me make a suggestion to you: If the so-called independent slate writing is the work of a conjurer, as you report, cannot you find within the broad confines of this earth some professor of magic who can make, through the agency of his art, an inanimate piece of stone write an intelligent sentence on a slate? It is a simple thing to do if legerdemain can do it. Then hire him to explain to the world how it is done — surely your means are ample — you would be but obeying the wishes of the generous dead who gave the money for that purpose, should you so expend a small portion of the bequest. Let the professor of magic do what the mediums of Cassadaga Lake did in the presence of scores of intelligent men and women, and science will know something not now known to her votaries — or a great fraud will be exposed to the gaze of an amused and credulous public.

Respectfully yours,

A. B. RICHMOND.

NOTE. — Throughout this volume the italics used in the excerpts from the Report of the Seybert Commission are, in most cases, my own.

A. B. R.

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donation - how fees
They now insist
and unprofitable
W. J. Lytle

CHAPTER II.

“Wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.”

Prov. xxvi. 12.

“The secret is mine, oh king! — Thou can’st not compel me to give it up.”

Old Play.

GENTLEMEN: As I have repeatedly said, I do not doubt your ability to properly make investigations of the kind required of you in the responsible position you occupy. If I ever had any doubts, they would be entirely removed by the oft-repeated assertion of one of your number as to *his* capacity, at least. On page 67 of your admirable report he naïvely remarks: —

“My habits of observation have been trained in this kind of work, and I watched the states intently during the process.”

This, of course, is conclusive evidence, as no one can know a man’s abilities so well as himself, and it would be folly for any one to doubt a fact stated on such reliable authority. It is this ability on your part, added to the truthfulness of your statements, and the very apparent, serious, and thoughtful candor that pervades the pages of your report, that must give it great weight with the public. Doubtless you relate everything as you saw it. It is this “habit of close observation,” and ability to truthfully and clearly relate facts that come under your notice, that must render your evidence nearly conclusive; and, as an illustrative case in point, I call your attention to page 19 of your report, where, in your description of what a juggler *can* do, you say: —

“Who can truthfully describe a juggler’s trick? Who would hesitate to affirm that a watch which *never left the eyesight for an*

instant was broken on an anvil, etc.; or that a handkerchief was burned before our eyes? We all know the juggler does not break the watch, and does not burn the handkerchief."

Surely, gentleman, it could not have been that one of your number who possesses trained habits of observation that thus described the juggler's feats referred to; if it was, he has profited very little by his training. There is not a youth of bucolic antecedents and rural education in the country who has seen the feat you refer to performed at a ten-cent side-show of a country fair, who *has* not observed that the watch does leave the eyesight for a *long instant* before it is apparently broken; not a boy in the country, whose habits of observation have been trained to that extent that he has observed the diurnal habits of the poultry on the farm in retiring to rest, but would see the error of your description of the simple trick referred to by you as an illustration in your argument to prove that the scientific experiments of Professors Zöllner and Crookes were simply legerdemain.

The juggler's feat of breaking a watch is so ancient, and so simple in its solution, that no magician would think of performing it before a city audience, unless perhaps he thought that that audience had received your training in habits of observation. Ask your friend, the accomplished magician Kellar, if he would think of introducing that "*trick*" on the stage in New York or Philadelphia, and he will tell you that if he did, he would expect to be greeted with hisses and cries of "Chestnut!" from the critics in the gallery;—and yet you seriously refer to it as an astounding feat, whereby people are deceived against the evidence of their senses and "habits of trained observation"; and your argument is this: Because a country audience at a side-show has been deceived by the feat of an itinerating juggler in apparently breaking a watch or burning a handkerchief, therefore

learned scientists, who for months and years have carefully investigated certain phenomena called "spiritual manifestations," have been deceived; and all they have been unable to explain by known natural laws is not phenomena, but jugglery and legerdemain.

If that is not your argument, if that is not the logical deductions you wish your readers to draw from your illustration, why did you introduce it? Can you, an intelligent and learned body of men, after concentrating and combining all your wisdom and learning to a logical focus, really assert that all supposed phenomena whose cause has escaped the close investigation of learned physicists for years, are to be attributed to the feats of a mountebank or a juggler?

Gentlemen, your syllogism is as follows: Itinerating jugglers have apparently broken a watch and burned a handkerchief in such a way that men of "trained habits of observation" could not understand how it was done. It was deception! Spirit mediums have apparently had independent slate-writing communications given to their sitters in such a manner that men of "trained habits of observation" could not understand how *it* was done: therefore it was deception. Or, to make the syllogism shorter, and more in accordance with the rules of logic:—

Men of "trained habits of observation" have seen feats performed by magicians that they could not understand; they were legerdemain.

The same men have seen feats performed by mediums that they could not understand;—

Therefore these feats were jugglery.

Gentlemen, how do you like the logic of your argument? Is it not well illustrated in an old text-book you and I studied in our college days?

"All hogs eat corn;
Man eats corn;—
Therefore man is a hog."

But the intrinsic merit of your happy illustration is not yet fully apparent. It not only well illustrates the logic of your report, but it is also evidence of the acuteness of your observation in performing your duties as Seybert Commissioners. Of course, the "trained habits of observation," with which at some period of your lives you witnessed the juggler's trick of your illustration, you brought to bear in your investigation of Spiritualism. Now when you state, in your history of the watch feat, that the watch never leaves the eyesight for one moment, — until it is broken on an anvil, — you undoubtedly state what your "trained habits of observation." have led you to believe; yet any magician will tell you that your observation was at fault; that the watch was out of your eyesight for a number of moments; and when thus out of your sight it was changed and a broken one substituted. Therein consists the secret of legerdemain; *i.e.*, the substitution of one thing for another, so adroitly done that the observer does not detect it. Now, as honest men searching for truth, can you account for the experiments of Zöllner, Crookes, Dr. Hare, and many other eminent scientists, upon such shallow reasoning as this?

On page 78 of your report, in describing some legerdemain feats of Mr. Kellar, you state: —

"Nine slates were washed, one by one, and laid in a pile on the table at Mr. Kellar's right.

"A slate was taken from the pile, both sides washed, another slate placed upon it, and both held together *under the edge* of the table. A long communication appeared upon one of them (or what seemed to be one of them), purporting to come from the spirits.

"Two more slates were taken and *apparently* both sides washed. One was placed on the other, and both laid upon the table in front of Professor Thompson, one end of the slates being held by him and the other by Mr. Kellar. When the upper slate was removed, the under side of it was covered with writing.

“Professor Thompson then changed his position to that which he held when with Dr. Slade—to the end of the table opposite Mr. Furness, and to Mr. Kellar’s right.

“Writing was produced in similar manner on two other slates without the committee detecting the manner in which it was produced,” etc., etc.

There again, gentlemen, comes in your peculiar and original system of logic. Because a magician deceived you, therefore every one who believes that he has received communications from the spirit world by independent slate writing has been deceived. Or, to make it shorter and more pertinent, without intending to be impertinent:—

Mr. Kellar made fools of us in his slate-writing experiments. Therefore Mr. Slade made fools of Crookes, Zöllner, and all others who have witnessed his experiments.

Gentlemen, that logic would be good if your wisdom was the standard of the world; if no one knew more than you, or if none were better trained to habits of observation than you are.

But, gentlemen, for one, judging your capacity as witnesses from the manner in which you relate the feat of breaking the watch and burning the handkerchief, while I do not in the least doubt your honesty or truthfulness, I am afraid that the deceptions of the side-show, mountebank, or country-fair magicians would be far beyond the depths of your powers of investigation.

Let me call your attention to another fact. On pages 68 and 69 of your report, one of your number asked Dr. Slade the following questions:—

“*Mr. Sellers.* Do you know a man named Kellar who is exhibiting in this city?

“*Dr. Slade.* I do not. I never knew him.

“*Mr. Sellers.* You may, however, be able to explain to me a very remarkable slate-writing experiment which Kellar has performed. I will state the details of it.

[Mr. Sellers here described at length Mr. Kellar's trick with the fastened slates, and in concluding, asked :—]

“How did Mr. Kellar do that?”

“*Dr. Slade.* He is a medium. He does that precisely as I do it.

“*Mr. Sellers.* But can he not do it by trickery?”

“*Dr. Slade.* No; it is impossible. He is a medium, and a powerful one.

[Here Mr. Sellers makes the following explanation :—]

“I pause here for the express purpose of having the fact noted, that, being thoroughly familiar with the details of the methods of these experiments, I can positively assure the committee that there is no mediumistic power in Mr. Kellar, so far as his methods are concerned; that these methods are as easy of solution as are any other physical problems.

“The enquiry was then addressed to Dr. Slade: ‘Do you know a man named Guernella, who with his wife gave séances?’ ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘I know him very well.’ ‘Well, how does he perform his wonderful exploits in rappings, etc.?’ ‘He is a medium, a powerful medium. I know him very well indeed. I can assure you that all that he does is done solely by means of his mediumistic powers.’

“*Mr. Sellers* continued: I now state to the committee that the Guernellas exhibited in Philadelphia some years ago as expositors of Spiritualism. *They did not expose it*, but they performed experiments, which, prior to that time were said to have been accomplished by the aid of spirits. Guernella himself, at my house, in my presence, in broad daylight, performed all the feats, and exhibited the phenomena that were produced at the *dark* and *other* séances, and he repeated them until I myself became an expert at performing them; for which *I paid him a consideration*. So much for the mediumistic power.”

So one of your number “knows how it is all done”; he paid a consideration for the knowledge. Is it not his duty then to publish it to the world? Are you paid from Henry Seybert's money to discover the secrets of spiritualistic communications, and then place the seal of silence on your own lips? In the name of common sense, what good will the world derive from your investigations? You might possibly die, and then the profound secret would

be lost, and spiritualistic mediums would continue to deceive the multitude of believers, who, like Henry Seybert in his lifetime, are ardent and honest in the faith. Gentlemen, in my humble opinion that secret does not belong to you; it is the property of the world, paid for out of the bequest of Mr. Seybert, and you are converting it to your own use; or, to speak in legal phraseology, you are embezzling it. I beg your pardon, gentlemen, but that is what the criminal codes of all the States in our Union call the offence.

On page 79 of your report, in speaking of a slate experiment performed by Mr. Kellar, April, 1887, you say:—

“A moment after the placing of the *slate under the table*, it was withdrawn to admit of a small pencil being placed upon it, Mr. Furness having remarked the absence of the pencil.

“The slate was not otherwise withdrawn from under the table above two inches until its final withdrawal, and the question was always, seemingly, on the *under side*.

“When the slate was brought out, a communication was found upon it in answer to Professor Thompson’s question.

“The answer was on the upper side of the slate. April, 1887: *Mr. Kellar afterwards revealed his methods to our colleague, Mr. Furness.*”

Mr. Furness, the acting chairman of your Commission, knows how it was done, and will not inform (as it seems) even his fellow-members. A morbid curiosity induces me to enquire *why*? Is your chairman acting in a public or a private capacity? Is he, in accordance with the duties of your Commission, investigating for the benefit of the public, or is he educating himself for a medium for his own pecuniary benefit in the future? If for the public, why does he not publish his information in your report? What good will your investigations do mankind if you keep them secret? You surely do not expect the millions of Spiritualists in the world to give up their cherished faith upon the pronouncement of your Commission that “all

is fraud"! Any lawyer will tell you that when you accepted the position of commissioners, under the bequest of Henry Seybert, to investigate "*all systems of morals, religion, or philosophy which assume to represent the truth, and particularly of Modern Spiritualism*" — your duties were public; that the result was not your private property, and you have no right to keep the secret. But the secret is not of sufficient value to justify the public in bringing an action of replevin against you for its possession. If the other members of your Commission desire to become "slate-writing mediums" as well as your chairman, let them go into the streets of your city, and ask any "street gamin" accustomed to attend dime museums, and the wonderful feat will be explained. The small boy will probably tell you that "the medium *glues* a piece of slate pencil under his finger nail, which for mediumistic purposes he has permitted to grow somewhat long, the pencil projecting a little beyond the nail. The question is written on one side of the slate. The medium, in placing it under the table, quickly and adroitly turns the slate over, then with the pencil under his nail he writes the answer on the *under side* of the slate; removes it from *under the table*, and in so doing adroitly turns it again, and, lo! the feat is done, the Seybert Commission confounded, and at last the profound secret is revealed to the acting chairman, and he will not tell how it was performed. The secrecy is wise, for, if divulged, the public might not place a proper estimate on *the training of one of your number for this kind of work*.

Why, gentlemen, I once knew a lady who, with a fragment of slate pencil glued under the nails of her fore and little finger, could write two short answers at once, one on each end of a small slate held under the table as you describe; and as you say, *with what skill practice can confer*. [See page 8.]

No! no! do not divulge the secret: do not do even as did the hair-dresser of the mythological King Midas, who when he was unable to keep the secret of his master, dug a hole in the ground, whispered it therein and covered it up; lest, as in his case, the reeds that grew over its grave might repeat to the wind a story of one of your number he would not have related.

I observe one singular fact in your report; *i. e.*, that you seem willing to relate to the world the way you say Dr. Slade performed his feats of legerdemain, and yet are so reticent as to the wonders of Kellar. Why is this, gentlemen? An interested and enquiring public would like to know.

On page 21 of your report you say:—

“ An eminent professional juggler performed, in the presence of three of our Commission, some independent slate writing far more remarkable than any which we witnessed with mediums. In broad daylight a slate perfectly clean on both sides was, with a small fragment of slate pencil, held *under* a leaf of a small ordinary table around which we were seated. The fingers of the juggler's right hand pressed the slate tight against the under side of the leaf, while the thumb completed the pressure, and remained in full view while clasping the leaf of the table. Our eyes never for a fraction of a second lost sight of *that thumb*; it never moved; and yet in a few minutes the slate was produced, *covered on both sides* with writing. Messages were there, and still are there; for we preserved the slate, etc., etc. We were utterly baffled. *For one of our number the juggler subsequently repeated the trick and revealed its every detail.*

Here it is again; another secret paid for by the Seybert bequest, unrevealed. If the Commission continues a few years longer, what a repository of mysteries it will become; but the average mind will fail to see how the world is to be benefited thereby, or how mankind is to get the worth of Henry Seybert's money, when the results of the investigation are to be locked up in the mental repositories of the members of the Commission. The

interest of the bequest will all be expended in enlightening the ten commissioners, while the rest of the world will be left in outer darkness. To the average understanding of benighted mankind, it would look as if this secrecy was not in accordance with either common honesty or common sense.

The reader cannot fail to observe how closely the "trained habits" of the gentlemen were directed to the thumb of the conjurer, which was on *top of the table* in "plain sight all the time," while — if there was no substitution of slates — his pencil-shod fingers were writing on the slate under the table. How deep, how profound the researches! Oh! if the investigators had only had a pocket looking-glass, and used it scientifically, what wonders it would have revealed! If they had only watched the fingers and slate under the table, and released the thumb from their espionage, they need not have paid a consideration for the secret.

It is certain that the thumb on the top of the table, "and in plain sight," could not have done the writing, while the fingers on the slate might have done so; yet the astute commissioners wasted all their training on the thumb, while the unobserved fingers performed the wonderful feat known only to the accomplished juggler and one member of the commission.

There is another method by which the expert conjurer imitates independent slate writing; yet it is so simple that it would hardly be supposed that it could be successfully practised upon the Seybert Commissioners; and yet, from their description of Mr. Kellar's feat, I am inclined to think that it was this old commonplace conjurer's trick, modified to suit the occasion and the audience, that so baffled their observation.

The feat is generally performed as follows: The juggler has a piece of cardboard cut to fit the slate inside of the frame; this cardboard is coated with a preparation of

slate-stone, like the ordinary *paper* slates. The long messages are written on the real slate, and covered with the paper slate, which is "sprung in" the frame and will retain its position. The slate is then ostentatiously washed or cleaned before the audience; the paper slate so closely resembles a real slate that the ordinary observer would not notice the difference. By the manipulations of the conjurer, this paper slate is removed, and the message shown on the real slate as if just written. There are various ways by which the deception is produced by expert conjurers. But no magician ever lived that can perform the actual experiment of causing a piece of pencil inclosed between two slates to write an intelligent sentence. It is as far beyond the power of magic as it would be to say to yonder mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the sea! and have the command obeyed. So far I defy the most accomplished magician now living.

With the flood of testimony as to the genuineness of the phenomena of so-called "spirit manifestations," the allegation that it is fraud, or the feats of a conjurer, is simply childish. Not only is the evidence of its occurrence under the severest scientific tests very abundant, but one of the most renowned magicians of the world has testified under oath that the experiments performed by Dr. Slade in the presence of Professor Zöllner were beyond the power of the art of magic.

Samuel Bellachini, the court conjurer at Berlin, made a statement in the form of an affidavit before Gustav Haagen, a notary, Dec. 6, 1877, in which he says: "I have thoroughly examined the phenomenal occurrences in the presence of Dr. Slade with the minutest observation, including the table, etc. I have not in the smallest instance found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitation or by mechanical apparatus;"—and he further states that "any explanation of the experi-

ments which took place under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining, by any reference to prestidigitation, is absolutely impossible."

Such, gentlemen, is the testimony of a world-renowned conjurer, and yet you assert that all was fraud and legerdemain. Is it possible that you expect an honest and unprejudiced jury to believe you?

On page 25 of your report, it being apparently a summary thereof, addressed to the Trustees of the Pennsylvania University, you say: "In conclusion, we beg to express our regret that thus far we have not been cheered in our investigations by a discovery of a single novel fact; but, undeterred by this discouragement, we trust with your permission to continue them with what thoroughness our future opportunities may allow, and with minds as *honestly* open, as *heretofore*, to conviction." Exactly so, gentlemen. Your honesty is so apparent in the manner in which you have treasured up the secrets you have purchased, and it is so evident from the general tenor of your report that you are "open to conviction" (do you mean for embezzlement?), that it is to be hoped that the Trustees of the Pennsylvania University will continue you in your present position, at least as long as the money to purchase secrets holds out.

What incalculable benefit mankind must receive from your carefully guarded secrets, and how much they will serve to enlighten the misguided believers in Spiritualism, time alone will tell. What a flood of light they will throw on the darkness of superstition and deceit, only the future can determine: but every one who shall read your report hereafter will doubtless be led to exclaim:—

"Oh! with what a show of truth and seeming sincerity
Cunning sin can cover itself withal."

Of course, gentlemen, this quotation applies to spiritualistic manifestations, *and not by any means to your report.*

CHAPTER III.

“The ordinary employment of artifice is the work of a petty mind ; and it almost always happens that he who uses it to cover himself in one place uncovers himself in another.” LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

ON page 90 of the Seybert Commission Report the reader will find this statement:—

“The following advertisement was, in March, 1885, inserted in *The Religio-Philosophical Journal*, of Chicago, *The Banner of Light*, in Boston, and *The Public Ledger*, in Philadelphia:—

“‘The Seybert Commission for Investigating Modern Spiritualism,’ of the University of Pennsylvania, hereby requests all Mediums for Independent Slate Writing, and no other at present, who are willing to submit their manifestations to the examination of this Commission, to communicate with the undersigned, stating terms, etc.

“‘HORACE HOWARD FURNESS,
Acting Chairman,
Philadelphia, Pa.’”

Possibly to the unreflecting reader this public advertisement may seem reasonably fair and proper, and to evince a determination on the part of the Commission to use no artifice, but to give the subject of “Modern Spiritualism” an honest, candid, and careful examination; but tested by the logic of the experience of mankind, and viewed from the standpoint of honest observation, it has a very different aspect.

On the first page of the report I find the following:—

“The belief in so-called Spiritualism is certainly not decreasing. It has from the first assumed a religious tone, and now claims to be ranked among the denominational faiths of the day.”

You admit, Gentlemen of the Commission, that Spiritualism has become one of the religious creeds of the day. And well you may; for, although as a "denominational faith" it was born during the last third of the present century, yet it has already passed its youth, and arrived at early manhood. No Christian faith ever spread so rapidly as has Spiritualism. It numbers millions as its votaries. It has not, like many new faiths, drawn its converts from the low, ignorant, or uneducated masses of mankind; its earnest and sincere followers are found in the highest walks of social life: educated scientists, prominent jurists, intelligent business men, as well as cultivated and refined women, have bowed down at its altar in earnest prayer, and have received from its doctrines and demonstrations a consolation not to be found in any other of the religions of the day. Where the doctrines of the so-called orthodox churches have left their believers to depend on faith alone, Spiritualism purports to present positive demonstration of its truths. For my own part, my agnosticism leaves me in doubt of its asserted facts, so apparent to many, yet I believe I can reason, fairly and unprejudiced, on its claims, and on the manner in which you have treated them in your report. As a lawyer, but not a theologian, it looks to me as if you closed your eyes at the *appearance* of truth, and opened them wide at the *shadow* of error: and really, gentlemen, your decision does not seem to be a fair one, and *your* court should at least give the Spiritualists a "*rule to show cause*" why your verdict should not be set aside and a new trial granted them.

Your advertisement referred to seems to be a right and proper method of obtaining evidence in the case; but is it so in fact? You admit that Spiritualism is a religion, and as such you propose to apply to its proofs only the rigid forms of scientific investigation, or the common-

place rules of business life. That is, when you want a test, you advertise for one, as a merchant would for products in which he deals, and treat it as if it were a mountebank show. Is this fair? Would the Christian world submit to have any such tests applied to the justly revered religions of the day? Let us see.

You know that among the many disputed questions of orthodox faith, one of the most prominent is as to the efficacy of prayer; and I speak of it with all reverence, and will not be misunderstood if I can prevent it; *for I do believe in prayer*—not that by it the mind of the Creator can be changed, or that he can be persuaded by the petitions of mankind to do what he had not intended to do, or not to do that which he had contemplated doing. The absolute immutability of nature's laws, reinforced by the assertion of James in his general epistle that "*Every good gift cometh from the Father, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,*" proves the unchangeableness of the mind of the Creator. Yet I do believe that from his throne on high he touches with his divine finger the human heart, and that prayer pours forth as spontaneously as did the water from the rock in Horeb when touched by the wand of Moses. No man can bow down in prayer to the Creator and not arise therefrom feeling that he ought to be better,—not because he has in the least changed the mind of the Deity, but by a reflex action on his own inward consciousness.

You know that there is a vast difference in the opinions of thinking men on this subject. Many believe that prayer is directly answered, and that petitions to the Most High are often granted because of their importunity. I do not believe this, and am not alone in my disbelief. For centuries this has been one of the vexed questions of theological disputation, one deemed of vast importance by the Christian world, and upon its truth or falsity

depends many a cherished Christian faith. You also know—you cannot help knowing the fact—that skepticism is vastly increasing at this time; that things are said and published to-day of the Christian religion that one hundred years ago would have been punished with the prison, and even death.

Now let us suppose that some ardent and wealthy “believer,” in view of the growing infidelity, should bequeath to a university of learning the sum of sixty thousand dollars, that the object of the bequest should be —

“To found a chair of philosophy, and that the university should appoint a Commission to investigate all systems of Morals, Religion or Philosophy which assume to represent the Truth, and particularly as to the EFFICACY of PRAYER.” The trustees of the university appoint a Commission of ten able men. They are directed to examine into all the evidence in the issue involved, and to report their opinion as to the truths of “so called” revealed religion, and “particularly as to its great fundamental doctrine — ‘The Efficacy of Prayer.’”

The commissioners meet and commence their investigations. They find on enquiry many *reported* instances of answered prayer. The Reverend Zöllner, D.D., Professor Crookes, D.D., Robert Hare, D.D., and a host of other learned and truthful men, all report instances that have come under their investigation, where they saw positive evidence that prayers had been answered. On the other hand, they find that a few years ago the president of a great nation was shot by an assassin; and that for long weeks he lay on a bed of most intense suffering, his spirit hovering between life and death; that he was a great and good man, whose life was of inestimable value to his country. The Commission find on investigation that, during his illness, millions of prayers ascended to the “*Throne on High*” asking that his wounds be healed,

and that he be restored to a nation that loved him so well. Yet, notwithstanding the earnest prayers of a whole Christian world, the good man died. Here the commissioners pause and remark to and among themselves, "With all this conflicting testimony before us we must investigate for ourselves." *One of our number by his habits of investigation has been trained to this kind of work:—* not that he has ever prayed himself; but then he knows how it is done, and can readily detect the spurious from the genuine article. A very short time thereafter there appears in all the religious and many of the secular newspapers of the day the following advertisement:—

"The 'RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL' Commission appointed by the TRUTH-DISSEMINATING UNIVERSITY of Philadelphia, Pa., for investigating Revealed Religion, and particularly the question of the 'Efficacy of Prayer,' hereby request all persons gifted in addressing petitions to the THRONE OF GRACE (and no others at present), who are willing to submit their powers of *persuading* and *instructing* the Creator what to do,—to the examination of this Commission, to communicate with the undersigned, stating terms, prices of prayers, etc.

"H—— H—— F——,
Acting Chairman."

"March, 1885.

At the time appointed the commissioners meet. They are determined not to be cheated, and therefore when a man appears before them who has the reputation of being a genuine Christian and peculiarly gifted in prayer, they look with suspicion upon him, and regard him as a fraud from the start. They insult him with (asides)—see page 54 of your Report, where the insolent *by-play* remark of one of your Commission is thought worthy of being recorded,—and when the *unfortunate* petitioner is requested to *pray at a mark*, and fails to hit the center; when, because of the embarrassment of his surroundings, he misses the target-board altogether, you dismiss him in

disgust and declare that all prayer is FRAUD!! Other applicants meet with like fate. In vain do honest, sincere Christians assure you from their own experience that there is no fraud in praying; that they have personally felt its consoling influence; that to them it has been a comfort in many of the trials of life; and that they know that their prayers have been answered in their most bitter hours of affliction. In vain do they refer you to that most beautiful petition "Our Father which art in heaven," and to the godlike mercy of the words uttered amid the tortures of crucifixion, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*";—in vain do they do this; your wisdom exceeds all that has gone before. The testimony of hundreds of good, intelligent men and women goes for nought with you. You know *better!*—because you have known of millions of unanswered prayers; and therefore all is fraud! fraud!! fraud!!!

And, besides, did not an accomplished juggler inform three of your number how the supposed results of answered prayer were accomplished?—and you believed him against the testimony of thousands who have felt its influence and known its results; therefore you repeat your pronouncement—*all is fraud!* and expect the world to have implicit faith in your wisdom and honesty, and that the great university will greet you with, "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

Gentlemen, while the foregoing is a supposititious case, it is almost an exact parallel of your course in the "Seybert Commission," and, although you may not see it, I believe the unprejudiced reader will.

As you admit that Spiritualism is a religion, with daily increasing converts, when you were appointed to investigate its truth or falsity, why should you not have pursued the same course that you would, had the question submitted to you been any of the orthodox creeds of the

day? You dare not assert that because many prayers are not answered, all praying is a fraud; you dare not sneer at the revered religion of the Bible; and yet you know that if its holy claims were subjected to such investigation as Spiritualism has received at your hands, not one of them would be sustained.

You cannot even prove the conversion of sinners by any other evidence than that of those who have been converted; you cannot prove the efficacy of prayer except by those who have felt its saving influence; you cannot prove the truth of the miracles except by recorded human testimony; and you can only prove a future existence by faith and belief in inspiration.

Gentlemen, if you had but applied the same generous rule of proof to Spiritualism that you would apply to orthodoxy, I sincerely believe your conclusions would have been more guarded, and your report more kindly worded. I well know the logical force of "*Reductio ad absurdum*"; yet when ten men of average capacity undertake to hold up to the public gaze in an absurd and ridiculous light a theory that has received the sanction of as many learned scientists and honest, intelligent observers as has "Modern Spiritualism," the absurdity will be retroactive, and will eventually crush them as the tread of a giant crushes an insect in his pathway.

Remember, gentlemen, I am not advocating the spirit source of the slate communications I received at Cassadaga Lake; I only suggest that your pocket mirror has not yet reflected all of the phenomena that hundreds of observers witnessed there; neither has your experience with "Caffray's Fly Paper" eradicated the belief in spirit manifestations from the land. Is it possible that you believe that your puny experiments and almost childish researches have annihilated Dr. Hare, demolished the scientific investigations of Professors Zöllner and Crookes

and a host of other able physicists, and that all other enquirers beside yourselves should wear a "cap and bells"? If so, your credulity far exceeds that of the most credulous Spiritualist on earth. In Dickens' inimitable story, "Hard Times," one of his most absurdly dogmatical characters, Gradgrind, was always demanding "facts; no theories, but facts,"—yet, when one of these unpleasant obstacles stood in his way, with a graceful backward wave of his hand he thrust it behind him, and in his opinion it was disposed of forever. Gentlemen, Dickens wrote his delineation of the peculiarities of Gradgrind as a caricature; he did not intend it for your imitation.

In investigating Modern Spiritualism you had a right to demand the same character of evidence, the same positiveness of proof, that you would have required if investigating any other religious theory—no more, no less. The fairness of this proposition must be obvious to all. Now there is a very large and respectable Christian denomination that believes in "sudden conversion"; a denomination always associated in my mind with the teachings of my childhood, and with the memory of an honored father, a dear mother, and loved brother and sisters. Suppose that a commission of ten men had been called to determine this theory of a church that has done as much to spread the light of the Gospel as any Christian organization on earth,—how should they have proceeded? Should they have called before them able, learned Christian divines, to hear from their lips the story of their experience—how and when they were converted, and how they felt when, kneeling in humble penitence at the "mourner's bench," God answered their tearful prayers with divine forgiveness? Or should they have required a hardened sinner to be brought before them, that they might witness his conversion?

Had they pursued *your* original method of theological

investigation, as practised by the Seybert Commission, they would have advertised for a great sinner, a notorious evil-doer, who was willing to be converted for a stipulated price to be paid by them, and to submit the process by which it was done to their investigation, asking for his terms, etc. They would then have offered a reward for some itinerating evangelist to come forward at an appointed time and convert him.

The eventful day arrives, and I can well imagine the scene. The ten august members of the Commission are seated around the room, their countenances rivalling in expression that of Minerva's favorite bird — its like unrecorded in history save in the Venetian Council of Ten of the seventh century. In solemn, silent expectancy they sit, each with a pocket mirror in his hand, and a fragment of Caffray's fly-paper on his head.

The candidate for conversion and the evangelist arrive. They are cordially received. The process begins, and is "closely watched all through." Soon it is ended, and the great sinner is apparently regenerated. The commissioners were as completely baffled as you say you were by Kellar's feats of slate writing. The price and the reward are paid. The commissioners retire with a consciousness of a well-performed duty. Afterwards the evangelist informs the members of the Commission that all was a feat of legerdemain; that the pretended regeneration was a deception, and that his convert is now serving a term in prison; and for a consideration he imparts the secret of how it was done to one member of the Commission.

Do you not think it would have been more in accordance with candid and intelligent investigation — if the evidence of the Christian ministers had failed to convince the Commission of their conversion — to have called before them a host of honest, educated business men and intelligent, pious women, and had them tell of the time when, op-

pressed with a consciousness of their sinfulness, they knelt before the "Throne of Grace" in humble prayer, and arose therefrom confident that their sins had been forgiven? Or, should they have required ocular proof that such conversions were possible? And, unless they could have seen an actual instance of regeneration, would you have justified their cry of "Fraud! fraud! all is deception! There is no such thing as a sudden conversion. Even St. Paul was mistaken, and the voice he heard and the light he saw were but illusions." No, no, gentlemen! well do you know, and well does the world know, that you would not dare to justify a report so made on any question involving one of the orthodox beliefs of the day. The "UNIVERSITY FOR DISSEMINATING TRUTH" would not have received and published the report.

Gentlemen, there is "a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself," and both the Commission and the University would have hesitated long before they dared to brave its indignation. In your case you evidently believed that "Modern Spiritualism" was an illusion, at war with the most popular of earth's pet creeds, that it endangered the faith of "true believers." You had your Master's work to do, and, ignoring the evidence of past history and the experience of many scientific men, you cry *fraud! fraud!* and probably by this time you have received from the power that created you the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord!"

Remember, by your commission you were directed to "investigate all systems of morals, religion, or philosophy which assume to represent the truth, and particularly of Modern Spiritualism"; — not simply "so-called *physical manifestations*," which are a very small part of its philosophy, — but the theory on which it is founded; all the evidence by which it is sustained, together with its moral

influence on mankind. How contemptible appear your methods of inquiry, how silly your investigations, how shallow your researches, compared with the importance and magnitude of the task you assumed to perform!"

Not more childish and imbecile would appear the efforts of an astronomer to learn all the mysteries of the celestial orrery with one opera-glass, than does your investigation of Spiritualism with sealed envelopes, printer's ink, pocket mirrors, and Cafray's paper. Why did you not call before your learned body a few, out of the thousands of intelligent Spiritualists who have investigated the subject for years, and have become satisfied of its cheering truths? Why did you not take their testimony as to what they had seen on the border-land of the great future? Is it possible that your conception of your own wisdom is such that you believe that the millions of intelligent men and women, who to-day believe in Spiritualism with a faith that knows no wavering, are all deceived, but that *you* could not have been? What in your opinion is the weight of the combined wisdom of your Commission compared with that of the millions of Spiritualists in the world, if you could be thus weighed in that invention of the ingenious monk — The "Philosopher's Scales?" Oh, gentlemen! gentlemen of the Seybert Commission! did you ever read in the proverb of the hopeless condition of a man wise in his own conceit?

On page 159 of your report — it being the conclusion and a kind of peroration thereof — your chairman sums up the result of your investigation as follows: —

"Although I have been thus thwarted at every turn in my investigations in Spiritualism, and found fraud where I had looked for honesty, and emptiness where I had hoped for fullness, I cannot think it right to pass a verdict, universal in its application, where far less than the universe of Spiritualism has been observed. My field of examination has been limited.

There is an outlying region claimed by Spiritualists, which I have not reached, and into which I would gladly enter, *were there any prospect that I should meet with more success.* I am too deeply imbued with the belief that 'we are such stuff as dreams are made on,' to be unwilling to accept a few more shadows in my sleep. Unfortunately, in my experience, Dante's motto must be inscribed over an investigation of Spiritualism, and all hope must be abandoned by those who enter on it.

"If the performances which I have witnessed are, after all, in their essence spiritual, their mode of manifestation certainly places them only on the margin, the very outskirts of that realm of mystery which Spiritualism claims as its own. Spiritualism, pure and undefiled, if it mean anything at all, must be something far better than slate writing and raps. These grosser physical manifestations can be but the mere ooze and scum cast up by the waves on the idle pebble; the waters of a heaven-lit sea, if it exist, must lie far out beyond.

"The time is not far distant, I cannot but think, when the more elevated class of Spiritualists will cast loose from all these physical manifestations, which, even if they be proved genuine, are but little removed from materialism, and eventually materializing séances held on recurrent days, and at fixed hours, will become unknown."

(— Signed by the Chairman.)

Now, most worthy Chairman of the Seybert Commission, it is very evident that you will never become a "martyr for opinion's sake." You are evidently a gentleman of education, cultivated tastes, and pleasing address, and as I diagnose your character from that portion of the report written by yourself, you are a wit, something of a wag, eminently and deservedly popular among your associates; and I sincerely hope some day to have the pleasure of taking you by the hand, and that our intercourse will be unaffected by either your report or my review.

The peroration of your summary is beautifully worded, but is illogical and unwarranted by the facts. You say "there is an outlying region, claimed by Spiritualists,

which you have not touched, and into which you would gladly enter, were there any prospect of success," etc. Oh, most faint-hearted investigator! How do you know that there is no prospect of success? When Luigi Galvani first witnessed the spasmodic movements of the leg of a frog caused by the piece of copper and zinc in his hand, there was little in it to suggest the electric light or ocean telegraph. It was an abnormal action of dead muscles, more slight and insignificant than any of the so-called spiritual manifestations; but it attracted the attention of one investigating mind, and the offspring of that investigation now illuminates the world, and whispers hourly along its iron nerves of sensation the passing events of every country on the globe. Had the similarity of the electric spark to the lightning met with your indifferent observation, Franklin would never have defied the storm-cloud with his kite. Had Galileo doubted *his* future prospect of success, the world would have stood still, and the sun revolved around it until some future investigator had discovered a fact now known to every school-boy. Had Columbus embarked upon his voyage with your despondency of success, the first ocean storm would have driven him back to Spain, and left other navigators to attain the success that rendered *his* name immortal. The true and capable searcher after truth never desponds, but pursues his way, overcoming all obstacles by the energy of his determination. Imbued by that spirit, the northern explorer keeps the prow of his vessel steadily pointed towards the ice-bound pole, while a Stanley, undaunted by obstacles, successfully penetrates the wilds of Africa. There is an amiable childlike weakness manifested in your remark that shows that nature never intended you for an investigator, and that you *are* truly "imbued with the belief that 'we are such stuff as dreams are made on.'" But I tell you Dante's motto has no place on the

temple dedicated to spiritual investigation ; on the contrary, those who enter its portals do not "leave all hope behind," but at every step they make toward its inner shrine, hope grows brighter and brighter, until at last, if human testimony is to be believed, they hear the familiar voices of their spirit friends, and often clasp their forms in loving embrace. And even if it is all an illusion, if it is of "such stuff as dreams are made on," yet belief and hope will illumine the pathway of life ; and if death should really prove to be a lasting sleep, if we never awake to consciousness, we shall never know that hope told a "flattering tale," and that we were deceived thereby. Instead of the cold, dread fear of annihilation, "Spiritualism" professes to demonstrate the fact of a future life ; and if that proof is delusive, beyond the eternal silence of the grave there will be no consciousness of error, and we shall never know that we have been deceived.

You say that "Spiritualism, pure and undefiled, if it mean anything at all, must be something far better than slate writing and raps. These grosser physical manifestations can be but the mere ooze and scum cast up by the waves on the idle pebble ; the waters of a heaven-lit sea, if it exist, must lie far out beyond."

That is a beautiful sentence, but how do you know that it is true? What do you know of the laws that environ spirit life? The insignificant throbbings of the pulse are in our bodies external evidence of our inner life ; but of life alone, not intelligence ; and as life manifests its presence by external evidence, so does intelligence. The eloquent tongue and vocal organs beat the air, causing certain vibrations which are called articulate sounds. These sounds by long experience have been formulated into words and sentences, and are only the means by which thought manifests itself. Does it matter what those

sounds are, or how made, if they only convey ideas? And as sound cannot be made without an exercise of force, neither can intelligence be manifested by sound without the presence of an intelligence back of the force and directing it. This proposition is certainly self-evident. It does not require evidence to establish its truthfulness. If, then, "raps" are made without the agency of either sitter or medium, they are proof positive of the presence of an unknown and unseen force; and if those sounds intelligently answer interrogatories, stating circumstances unknown to either sitter or medium, are they not conclusive evidence of the presence of an *intelligent force*? And where can you find that mysterious power save in that incomprehensible thing we call the human soul?

What boots it as to the manner in which intelligence manifests itself? whether by articulate sounds made by the tongue, or by raps, or by causing an inanimate pencil to write intelligently? The proof of *its* presence is proof of a living soul or spirit; and it matters not how plebeian its garb, or how humble its mode of manifestation. The lowly manger argues nothing against the Divinity that redeemed the world, while the humble craft of the carpenter was followed by Him who created the universe. The true Christian does not enquire why the Messiah came not with regal robes and diadem, or why he con-sorted with shepherds and fishermen; but he believes the glorious truth of his coming as proven by human testimony recorded on the pages of Holy Writ.

The true investigator of phenomena does not waste his time in the vain enquiry of why it did not occur in some other manner; but observing it as it exists, he seeks for the laws that govern it, and the conditions that surround it. Useless indeed would be the enquiry, "why does it not manifest itself in some other and more seemly method," when we cannot explain why it occurs at all.

Why is it so? may be asked of the most familiar phenomena ; and because unanswerable by the present knowledge of science, does it prove that they do not exist?

Why does the "night-blooming cereus" open its beautiful petals only in darkness, when all the other gems of the floral kingdom love the light of the sun? Who knows? save that the spirit life of the plant demands certain conditions which must be obeyed. Environed in the light of day the plant refuses to bloom ; enveloped in darkness it obeys the laws of its being, and opens its petals in the midnight air. Why does *hydrocyanic acid* — a most subtle poison — lose its deadly properties when exposed to the light? Why does the photographer require a "*dark séance*" in preparing his plates? Why does light affect his sensitive chemicals? Who can tell? We only know that it is so, and must be content with that knowledge until Nature unfolds her secrets to the investigator. So it is with spirit life. If there is such a life, it must, of course, be governed by natural laws ; what those laws are the investigator must seek to find, and not become discouraged on the very threshold of investigation because the phenomena are not in accordance with his æsthetic tastes. You see the spirit world was probably created before the Seybert Commission, and therefore it was impossible to consult that honorable body as to the most proper manner in which spirit life should make its presence known to the denizens of earth. Of course this error of the creative power is to be lamented ; but as it is irremediable, the world must be content, and you ought not to be offended, or feel that you were slighted.

As to the "ooze and slime cast up by the waves and the heaven-lit sea far out beyond," as a plain, practical student I see no better way of ascertaining the properties of the waters of the distant sea than by an analysis of the "ooze and slime" we find on the "pebbles." If we

examine them with the microscope and find a certain species of *infusoria* in their composition, we may well determine that the "heaven-lit" waters are capable of sustaining *piscatorial* life; if, on analysis, we find the presence of *chloride of sodium*, we can be sure that it is a *sea* and not a *lake*. Therefore it is "best not to despise the day of small things."

You say that the day is not distant when the more elevated class of Spiritualists will cast loose from all these physical manifestations, which, even if they prove to be genuine, are but little removed from materialism." Well, what if they are? Is there anything disreputable in believing that spirit forms are material?—that matter may become so etherealized by attenuation as to become suitable for habiliments for the immortal soul in the spirit world? Have you no other conception of matter than as you see it in the gross forms of the chemical elements known to science?

In my college days chemists numerated sixty-one elements only. It was then supposed that all the diversified forms of natural objects were but a combination of these elements in different proportions; sixteen, or, at the most, eighteen of these only, entered into the composition of the human body. Since that time, scientific investigation has discovered many more, until now there are nearly one hundred in the catalogue of chemistry, and the end is not yet. All these elements differ in density, gravity, and properties. Even another ray of light has been added to the *solar spectrum*. Of the actinic ray, but little was known in my boyhood; and yet we may now call it the very soul of heat and light. Scientific discoveries are but in their infancy; what they may yet unfold to our gaze ere the earth shall become, like the moon, an old, worn-out planet incapable of sustaining animal life, not even scientists can predict with certainty. In her path-

way of progress, science has never yet and never will discover *Nothing* as a substantive element. The very proposition involves absurdity. Other and varied forms of matter she will discover; but that impalpable thing *Nothing* is as far beyond the reach of her investigations as it is of our conception. What, then, are spirit bodies? impalpable nothings, or etherealized matter? Of the one we cannot conceive; of the other we may; and, although ever so attenuated, yet the power of science may compel it to yield up its secrets to our investigation.

Who knows where the process of attenuation begins or ends? Of earth's known elements we commence with platinum, the heaviest of known substances, and gradually ascend through a series of inorganic bodies, constantly diminishing in density until we come to hydrogen gas, the most attenuated of all known elements; one hundred cubic inches of which weigh only two and a quarter grains. Here human investigation has paused, because of inability to go farther. But is it probable that Nature stops, in her process of attenuation, at precisely the point where man, because of imperfect organs of investigation, or for the want of more perfect and delicate instruments of observation, can go no farther? Surely not! And we may reasonably believe that there are forms of matter as much more attenuated than hydrogen gas, — as it is than platinum; of such etherealized matter I can conceive a spirit world to be formed, almost as impalpable as was the palace of Drake's "Sylphide Queen," —

“ Whose spiral columns, gleaming bright,
Were streamers of the northern light;
Its curtain's light and lovely flush
Was of the morning's rosy blush,
And the ceiling fair that rose above
The white and feathery fleece of noon.”

No, no! Mr. Chairman of the "Seybert Commission," even if you are "deeply imbued with the belief that we are of such stuff as dreams are made on," and although you may thus voice the opinions of your fellow-commissioners, I am not so imbued. I cannot conceive of a world formed of so impalpable material as "the baseless fabric of a vision"; neither do I believe that the promulgation of such ethereal sentiments will increase the happiness of mankind.

I would rather believe in another world constructed of matter as dense as granite rock; inhabited by spirits with the gravity of platinum; yet formed by the wisdom of the Creator for Man's future happiness, than that —

"The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

My dear Chairman: I am afraid your admiration for Shakespeare's visions has destroyed your hope, impaired your philosophy, and demoralized your theology. My own appreciation of the "Bard of Avon" amounts nearly to reverence; many of the happiest hours of my life have been spent in spiritual communications with him through the "*medium*" of his works; yet as a theologian, he is not probably to-day standard authority with the orthodox Christian world. But there is an old Book intimately associated with the holiest recollections of my life. It was the chief source from which a Christian father derived the lessons taught me in my youth; attached to it are the memories of the loving caress of a mother's gentle hand, —

"As she turned from her Bible to bless her child."

All the good there is in me I believe has come from its lessons impressed upon the plastic mind of my childhood: all the evil that has blotted the pages of my manhood is because I have disregarded its mandates; and in that Book I find so many evidences of a spirit existence in another world, that I cannot believe that "our little life is rounded with a sleep" that knows no awakening. To my mind the evidence of spiritual visitations to this earth, as recorded in that Book, is—

"Confirmation strong as proofs of holy writ;"

and that manifestations demonstrative of its asserted truths must be productive of good and not evil. What the demonstrations of Euclid, made over two thousand years ago, are to the science of geometry as taught to-day, so may the spiritual manifestations of the present be to the unfolded truths of the great future. In speaking of man's future destiny, you say you "*do not know*," and, of course, your hope and faith are in proportion to your knowledge; the Spiritualist says he does know, and his hope and faith are based upon what he believes to be an absolute certainty,—and yet you deprecate his hopeless condition. Would you not, if you could, exchange your ignorance for his knowledge? do you prefer the gloom and darkness of uncertainty, to the light and joy of positive conviction?

Should the belief in Spiritualism ever become the prevailing doctrine of the world, the trite saying "*Memento mori*" will be converted into the more rational one "*Memento vivere*." No longer will the first dread inscription be engraved on memorial tablet or headstone. No more will the monumental tomb be regarded as an emblem of the end of life, but its beginning. The grave will no longer be called "the last resting-place," but the cradle of a new birth. As the young expectant mother prepares

costly and appropriate raiment for the advent of the new life sleeping beneath her bosom, so shall we, in our probationary state on earth, fashion our moral vestments appropriately to the new birth of immortality. Our fetters, our prisons, and instruments of death would have a far less restraining power against sin and crime, than would the certainty of a future life, and its inevitable conditions or penalties attendant upon a violation of nature's moral laws. It is the certainty of punishment, not its extent or cruelty, that restrains the wrongdoer. It is the certainty of reward, not hope or expectancy, that cheers life's weary wayfarers day by day, and lightens the burdens their environments compel them to bear.

If the asserted facts of Spiritualism are true, no unprejudiced mind can doubt its beneficial effects upon mankind. What mathematical demonstration is to plausible yet uncertain theories, or chemical analysis is to the superstitions of alchemy, or the absolutely certain calculations of astronomy to the vague, fanciful theories of astrology — so are the present, and so will be the coming proofs of Spiritualism, of a future life, to the cold, uncertain evidence of religious creeds that live by faith alone.

I am well aware of the apparent absurdity of some of the claims of Spiritualism, but time will develop its truths and uncover its falsehoods. Every rose has its thorns, every diamond its specks; and since the world began, every new-born truth has been tainted with fraud and deception. Yet —

“ Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers :
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among his worshippers.”

CHAPTER IV.

A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION TRIES TO BECOME
A MEDIUM.

"O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursel as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
And foolish notion."

BURNS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SEYBERT COMMISSION: On page 124 of your very candid and dignified report is a head line—

MEDIUMISTIC DEVELOPMENT.

From the subject thus prominently introduced to the attention of the reader, as well as from the profundity, erudition, and sincere truthfulness of your investigations, one would naturally suppose that this phenomenon of Spiritualism would be treated with at least ordinary respect and consideration; that all the members of your Commission would concentrate their powerful intellects to a focus on this subject, and that the world would be illuminated by the coruscation. Not so, however. One of your number only seems to have given the matter any attention, or to have had any desire to attain mediumistic powers; the rest of you evidently thought with the Psalmist, —

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it."—Ps. cxxxix. 6.

How fortunate it is for mankind that one of the Seybert commissioners had sufficient nerve to endure the ordeal, and to give to the world the astounding results. I am afraid the "coming man" will not give him the

credit he really deserves. But few can fully appreciate the noble motives of his ambition; and only those who have read in the fables of Æsop the lamentable fate of the ambitious *batrachian* who strove to attain *bovine* proportions, can appreciate the dangers that surround him. I will give his experience in his own words; and while the reader reads the four pages of this thrilling narrative, let him not forget that it is a part of a report of ten able, conscientious men, and as such endorsed by them; that it was written while in the performance of a sacred trust imposed upon them by a noble bequest given by a philanthropist who only asked as a return for his generosity that the recipients of his bounty should carefully, candidly, and truthfully investigate and report to the world the result. I appeal to every thoughtful, fair-minded reader of the next four pages, to determine whether the investigation of the Seybert commissioners, and their report thereon, are such as to command the respect and win the confidence of the public. To me it reads like a cruel and unwarranted burlesque of the opinions and religious belief of the generous dead, whose money they receive while they desecrate his memory.

From reading the report it seems as if one of the commissioners was made a victim of a practical joke, by some one whose knowledge of human nature did not deceive him in the selection of a proper subject for his wit. And that joke is narrated in the report as an argument against *mediumistic development*, and endorsed by the ten members of the Commission. It is related as follows, and doubtless the reader will be surprised to see no blush of shame on its pages, as he reads it:—

“At my first séance, as a member of this Commission, I was told by the Spirit of Elias Hicks, through Mrs. Patterson, that I was gifted by nature with great Mediumistic power. Another Medium, with whom I had a session shortly afterwards (I can-

not remember his name, but he advertised himself as a great 'Australian Medium'), professed himself quite unable to exert any power in the presence of a Medium so much more powerful than himself. 'Father Holland,' the control of Mrs. Williams, in New York, assured me that I merely needed development to have Spiritual manifestations at my own home; and Joseph Caffray was so emphatic in his assertions of my extraordinary Spiritual capabilities, that I began to think that it was my duty to quicken these dormant powers and not to let them 'rust in me unused'; and if successful, when I had become fully 'developed,' I could offer myself to my fellow-Commissioners as a *corpus vile* on which every experiment could be made, and at a great saving of expense.

"Spiritualists constantly reproach investigators of Spiritualism with faint-heartedness and lack of patience; they allege that at the very first rebuff all investigating ardor cools, and that one failure is deemed sufficient to condemn a whole system.

"If the case be really thus, the Spiritualists have a show of reason for this objection, and it behooves the Seybert Commission to give no ground for it.

"After much deliberation I decided to put myself in the hands of Caffray for 'development.' I preferred this Medium, first, because he was the most emphatic of all in his assertion of my almost unrivalled Mediumistic powers, and in his confidence that indications of Spiritual growth would be manifest in three or four weeks, and at the end of six weeks or of two months I might celebrate my Spiritual majority by slatefuls of messages; and, secondly, Mr. Hazard assured me again and again that Caffray was the 'greatest Medium in the country'; and did not Mr. Hazard, by way of proof, show me a stoppered vial containing a card, on which, through Caffray's Mediumship, a message had been written while the closed vial was fast held in his closed hand?

"The first step was the purchase of two slates from Caffray, for which I gave him several dollars. They were common enough to look at, but ah! they had been for months in his Materializing Cabinet and had absorbed Spiritual power to the point of saturation, and fairly exuded it. I brought them carefully from New York, and folded them in black muslin, and laid them away in a dark drawer.

"Caffray told me that with a beginner the Spirits found it

somewhat easier to write with French chalk than with slate pencil. So I bought a box of a dozen pieces, such as tailors use.

“The instructions which I received from Caffray were to keep these slates carefully in the dark, and every evening at about the same hour to sit in total darkness, with my hands resting on them for about a half or three-quarters of an hour; to maintain a calm, equable, passive state of mind, even to think of any indifferent subject rather than to concentrate my thoughts too intently on the slate writing. There could be no question of the result. A Medium of my unusual and excessive power would find, at the end of three weeks, faint zigzag scratches within the closed slates, and these scratches would gradually assume shape, until at last messages would be legible, probably at the end of six weeks, or of three months at the very farthest.

“In addition to this, I must wear, night and day, a piece of magnetized paper, about six inches square, a fresh piece every night and morning; its magnetism was exhausted in about twelve hours. When I mentioned to Mr. Hazard the proposed use of this magnetized paper, he assured me that it was a capital idea — that he had himself used it for a headache, and when he put it on the top of his head, it turned all his hair backward. I confess to dismay when I heard this; Caffray had told me that I must wear this paper on the top of my head under my hat! But did it not behoove the Acting Chairman of the Seybert Commission to yield himself a willing victim to the cause of Psychological Research? Was to be, or not to be, a Medium so evenly balanced that the turning of a hair, or of a whole head of hair, was to repel me? Perish the thought! That paper should be worn on the top of my head, under my hat, and that hat should be worn all day long. I would eat my breakfast with that hat on, eat my dinner with that hat on, and sleep with that hat on, and that magnetized paper should remain on the top of my head, let it turn my hair to all the points of the compass, if it would!

“When I received the slates from Caffray, he had no paper that was sufficiently magnetized just then; he had some sheets that were about half done, and promised to send them to me as soon as the process was complete.

“In the meantime I began with the slates, sitting with them in total darkness from about a quarter-past eight to nine o'clock every evening, with my hands resting on them lightly.

“In three or four days the paper arrived. I explained to my

family that hereafter they must not infer, from the wearing of my hat indoors and at meals, either that my wits had slipped, or that I had become converted to Judaism, but that my conduct was to be viewed by the light of the pure flame of research. In my secret soul I resolved that I would go at once, that very morning, to New York and plead with Caffray for some slight easing of my ordeal. The 'Spectre of the Threshold' appeared to wear a silk hat, and I was afraid I never, never should pass him.

"The magnetized paper I handled with awe. It was, in outward semblance, ordinary white blotting-paper, and, from some faint indications of ink here and there, looked as though it might on occasion have served its original use; but had I not paid a dollar a sheet for it? It must be good.

"As I started for the train I put a piece on the top of my head, gave a fond, farewell look at my hair, and planted my hat firmly on my brows. I reached the train, and while looking for a seat caught sight of my friend, Miss W—. Of course, I instantly bowed, and instantly there came fluttering down before her astonished and bewildered eyes a piece of blotting-paper. I snatched it hastily, and, in terror lest I had already broken the charm and forfeited all chance of Mediumship, retired to the rear of the car and furtively replaced the precious pad. Decidedly I must see Caffray at once.

"Luckily, when I reached New York I found that eminent Medium at home, and, 'bonneted,' rehearsed to him my dread anticipations. He could not repress a grim laugh, and to my inexpressible relief gave me permission to wear the paper suspended round my neck next the skin.

"With those precious slates I sat every night, at the same hour, in darkness. I allowed nothing to interfere with this duty; no call of family, of friends, of society was heeded. At the end of three weeks I searched every molecule of the slate for the indication of a zigzag line, but the surface was unsullied, and its black monotony returned stare for stare.

"Still hopeful and trustful, I continued, day by day and week by week. The six weeks expired. Not a zig, nor a zag. Caffray was kept busy magnetizing paper. I renewed my stock and determined to push on to two months. I moved to the country and carried my slates thither, wrapped in double folds of black muslin. The days and weeks rolled on. Two months passed.

The slates were as clean as when they came into my possession. I would go on to three months. Does not a hen sit for three weeks? Where a hen gives a week, shall not I give a month? Is not a Medium worth more than a chicken?

“‘Courage!’ cried Caffray, with each batch of paper. I went to the seashore, and my slates went with me. Not a single evening did I break my rule.

“And so it went on. The three months became four; became five; became six!

“And there an end, with absolutely virgin slates.

“I had used enough blotting-paper, it seemed to me, to absorb a spot on the sun. I dare not calculate the number of hours I had spent in darkness.

“Let Spiritualistic reproaches of investigators for lack of zeal and patience be heaped up hereafter till ‘Ossa becomes a wart’; I care not; my withers are unwrung.

“*Punch* gives a receipt for making ‘Gooseberry Fool’: ‘Carefully skin your gooseberries, extract the seeds, and wash the pulp in three waters for six hours each. Having done this with the gooseberries, the *Fool is perfect.*’”

Signed by H. H. F——, the Acting Chairman of the Seybert Commission.

Gentlemen, in all candor let me ask, are you not ashamed of the foregoing pages, copied verbatim from your report? Is it possible that you believe that a thoughtful public will approve of them, or that they will carry conviction to a single mind, save of that class described in the *receipt* of *Punch* given immediately over the signature of your chairman,—and, as many would think, so placed in exact accordance with “*the law of the fitness of things*”?

When we take into consideration the munificence of the gift of Henry Seybert, and the high character of the institution to which it was given, can any one for a moment suppose that the donor intended that a portion of his money should be expended in employing a troop of comedians to enact a comic opera before the public, or

exhibit a Harlequin or Pantaloon for the amusement of scoffers and the thoughtless? On the very first pages of your report is found the statement that, "*The late Henry Seybert during his lifetime was known as an enthusiastic believer in Modern Spiritualism.*" He lived a noble Christian life, and died in that faith; and little did he think, when he made the bequest that enriched the "University of Pennsylvania," that a portion of it would be used to pay for a wanton public attack on the religion he loved, and for holding up to ridicule and contempt his most cherished faith. Philip of Macedonia once caused the words "*ungrateful guest*" to be branded with letters of fire on the forehead of one, for an act of ingratitude far less than this; and the innate sense of justice of the world for long ages has approved of the punishment.

If the Seybert Commissioners, after laborious and profound investigation with their "pocket mirror," their "printers' ink," and Caffray's "fly paper," had found the subject too deep for their combined wisdom, and that all the manifestations they witnessed were frauds, how easy it would have been to so report in a candid manner, and with kindly words. How much more would it have accorded with their position as commissioners, to whom was intrusted the investigation of a subject that many of the most learned scientists of the world have thought worthy of deep and profound consideration. To the thoughtful mind there is no argument in stale jokes copied from penny papers, or flatulent witticisms as old as the folly of man. Their adverse opinions could have been recorded without sarcasm or ridicule or doing aught to cast undeserved obloquy on the cherished faith and memory of the defenceless dead.

Can the candid reader see in the ridiculous experience of the "Acting Chairman of the Seybert Commission," while he was the victim of a practical joke, an argument

worthy of a moment's consideration, against a religious faith that has its millions of converts among the best educated and most intelligent men and women of the world? Are the investigations of Professors Crookes and Zöllner, Dr. Hare, and their learned contemporaries to be blown away by the breath of literary buffoonery? To all those who have read the report of the Seybert Commissioners this question is most respectfully submitted without a doubt as to what the verdict may be.

Should the Seybert Commission continue to act and conclude to adopt an official seal, let me suggest that the insignia thereon be a "cap and bells," and a "gooseberry," surrounded with the inscription, "*Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.*"

CHAPTER V.

"Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,
A truth the brilliant *Commission* never knew."

COWPER.

"His studie was but litel on the Bible."

CHAUCER.

"Bibles laid open millions of surprises."

HERBERT.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SEYBERT COMMISSION: It now becomes my pleasant duty to call your *especial* attention to an old and very interesting Book which, although it may not heretofore have attracted your notice, yet I can assure you is well worthy of your perusal.

I have frequently mentioned this Book to you in the preceding chapters of my review of your report. The reason of this seeming tautology is my anxious desire that you should read it, and become impressed with the many beautiful lessons of morality and Christian charity to be found on its pages. As to its origin and history, for your information I will state that A.D. 325 there was a certain Roman emperor called Constantine. He was a great man, as the world estimated greatness at that day; but even an old lawyer would find it difficult to convince a jury of the present time that he was as good as he was great. There was one act of his life (among others) that I always thought was not right, although it seems to have been eminently proper at that day. You see it was the custom long ago among the ancient Oriental rulers, when either a man or a philosophical fact stood in their way, to murder the man and *kill the fact*. The convenience of this system of procedure must be very evi-

dent to you, gentlemen, as you seem to have adopted it in your able investigation.

Constantine had a gallant and accomplished son named Crispus, who was exceedingly popular with the people. He also had a daughter Constantina, who was noted for her beauty and virtue. This son and daughter stood in the way of the great emperor's schemes of personal aggrandizement, and he had them put to death on a charge of treason. This was A.D. 324. For a few months after this the machinery of his government seemed to run smoothly, when, unfortunately, there arose a dispute in the Church between one Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, and Arius, who was a presbyter in his diocese. Arius presented a few stubborn facts to the bishop, which that eminent divine could not "*climb over,*" neither could he walk around them. So, to use the language of a notable author, "*he commanded Arius to come over to his sentiments, and to quit his own.*" It is somewhat remarkable how very like the methods of investigation of that day were to those of the present time. Well, Arius, who was a man of brains and education, objected to this summary way of disposing of his *facts*, and theories built thereon. Then Alexander wrote a circular letter to all his subordinate bishops, in which he denounced Arius and his partisans as "heretics, apostates, blasphemous enemies of God, full of *impudence* and impiety, forerunners of Antichrist, imitators of Judas, *and men whom it was not lawful to salute or bid God-speed.*" How little times have changed since then!

Constantine, who, it seems from history, rather "sided" with the great bishop instead of the comparatively humble Arius, — A.D. 325, or thereabouts, — called together the "great Council of Nice." It consisted of about three hundred and eighteen bishops — a mystical number. The proceedings of this council are somewhat uncertain; yet,

as a general statement, it is safe to say that by it our Bible and New Testament were placed on canonical grounds, and from this little fountain have flowed the streams that have watered the earth with the beneficent results of the Christian religion. I have been thus prolix, gentlemen, fearing that "*your habits of observation*" may not have been trained in this particular direction; but, as the result of the Nicene and other councils, a Book has been given to the world, generally called the "HOLY BIBLE." There is no way of properly estimating the good the world has derived from this sacred volume; wherever it is the most revered, there the rights and liberties of mankind have been secured the best; there the blessings of civilization are the most abundant, while freedom of thought, the rights of property, and personal liberty are but the offspring of its inspiration. To doubt the truth of the incidents it relates is infidelity; to attempt to evade the facts it records is heresy; to misconstrue its statements is a sin against the Creator; to deny its plainly written truths, a crime against God and man.

Gentlemen, I now desire to call your attention to a few incidents related in its sacred pages, which you could not have been aware of before you made your report; for, if the records of the Bible prove anything with incontrovertible distinctness and certainty, it is the visits of spirits from the unknown world to this. The road from heaven to earth, as well as from earth to heaven, has been trodden by angel feet ever since the world began, — or sacred history is false, and the relations of the Bible untrue.

From the time when the Lord spake unto his chosen people "in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice" [Deut. v. 22], and talked with Moses at the door of the Tabernacle [Exodus xxxiii. 9];

And looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the

pillar of fire and the cloud, and took off their chariot wheels [Exodus xiv. 19-26];

And when the angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and called, Moses, Moses! [Exodus iii. 2, 3, 4];—

From that far distant time, up to the very present, the footprints of angel visitants have been seen all along the pathway of our race, and he who asserts the truths of the Bible and denies these facts, permits his prejudices to blind his reason, and ignores both the logic and testimony of the Bible. It is true, gentlemen, that the Seybert bequest only speaks of "Modern Spiritualism" when prescribing the subject of your investigation; yet what better evidence could you have of the fact that certain phenomena once existed than the pages of Holy Writ? And if it is true that spirit visitations were *once* very frequent on this earth, why did you not, in the profundity of your researches, try to ascertain when they ceased, and magic and legerdemain took their place; and when an unchangeable Being changed his purposes and blotted out certain phenomena he once deemed necessary to the happiness of mankind? Have you never heard of the Bible and the incidents it relates? If you have, why do you sneer at manifestations that were once ordained of God, as therein narrated?

The Reverend Samuel Watson, of Tennessee, late of the Methodist Church, a gentleman sincere and estimable in all the relations of life, says:—

"Spirit manifestations constitute the basis on which the whole fabric of Christianity has been built; Primitive Christianity as taught by its founders, and pure Spiritualism, are identical."

This statement seems to be true. In times long past *when the Creator desired any especial thing to be done on earth to convince man*, he sent his angels; and they

visited his people and orally repeated to them the commands of the Most High. We have the record of many notable instances of this kind in the Bible; and as they may be new to the members of your Commission, permit me in the most respectful manner to call your attention to a few of them. You will find them interesting reading. Their very novelty may add to the pleasure you will derive from their perusal.

The prophet Joel, chapter ii. 28, prophesies thus:—

“And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.”

Now I am not a theologian, yet to me that seems to be a very plain statement of what was to happen. Has that prophecy been fulfilled? If so, when? Is it yet to be fulfilled? If so, when? and how?

The eighteenth chapter of Genesis, in speaking of a spiritual visitation to Abraham, commences thus:—

“And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day;

“And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground.”

Now the Bible says these three men were “materialized spirits,” or angels; and unless, gentlemen, you are confident that they were mountebanks, and this was all jugglery, I am compelled to believe the Bible. I mean no disrespect to you, but this is the way the evidence strikes an old lawyer.

The nineteenth chapter of Genesis commences as follows:—

“And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and Lot seeing them, rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.”

Now, gentlemen, do you really believe that these were two "materialized spirits" from another world? You remember how witty you were in your report when speaking of materialization, and seemed to be surprised that the spirits you saw (?) were so like flesh and blood; and yet, if I recollect the narration of the event related of Lot, he said to his angel guests, "Tarry all night with me," and they did; "and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat."

Rather strong evidence that of a substantial materialization! But do you believe the story? *What about our being such stuff as dreams are made on?* Was that a vision of Lot's, or an *equus nocturnus*? Or, more properly speaking, did Lot in his sleep have an attack of *ephaltes*? Or was it the work of an ancient Kellar? You dare not deny the truth of the Bible! But have you the moral courage to admit its veracity in the relation of this incident?

"Take another example to our purpose quite."

Once upon a time there was a certain ruler in Israel called Saul, and, says sacred history in 1 Samuel xxviii. : —

"Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel lamented him.

"And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

"And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

"And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

"And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

"Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit."

When I first read this story I did not understand what class of women these were, and so I consulted the cele-

brated commentator, Adam Clark, LL.D., F.S.A., and M.R.I.A., well known and acknowledged authority in the theological world; and he informed me that "they were those who had familiar spirits, whom they could invoke when they pleased, and *receive answers from them* relative to futurity."

The servants said unto Saul, "Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor."

Saul disguised himself and called on the woman, and after some preliminaries, said to her, "Bring me up Samuel"; and if we believe sacred history, the spirit of Samuel came. Although it is not certain whether Saul actually *saw* Samuel's spirit, yet Samuel spake to Saul, and said:—

"Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?"

Let us remember that Saul and Samuel had been old friends. If I remember right, Samuel had anointed Saul as king.

After some conversation the spirit told Saul that the Lord would deliver Israel into the hands of the Philistines, and on the morrow Saul and his sons should be with him. The prophecy was true. The next day the Israelites were defeated, and Saul and his three sons were slain in the battle.

Dr. Adam Clark says: "*That Samuel did appear on this occasion is most evident from the text; nor can this be denied from any legitimate mode of interpretation.*"

Here, then, was a woman medium, and a spirit was "called up," and the spirit talked with Saul, and truthfully prophesied of the result of the impending battle. Gentleman, is that story true? If it is, does it not relate the occurrence of a "spirit séance" as clearly as language can narrate it?

Let us take one more instance of "spirit manifestations," very nearly resembling what Professors Zöllner and

Crookes saw; *i.e.*, a *spirit hand*. In chapter v. of Daniel it is related that "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords."

"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote, **MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.**" This, too, when interpreted by Daniel, was a prophecy which was immediately fulfilled.

Now, gentlemen, once more I ask, Are these Bible stories true? Assuredly you dare not deny them! Then, if true, were they spiritual manifestations or feats of jugglery? In both cases they prophesied truthfully, and you would hesitate to attribute them to ancient magic.

In the logic of your philosophy: If these phenomena once occurred, why may they not again? If they once happened, was it not in accordance with the laws of the Creator? Do you not believe that he is unchangeable, — that he now governs the universe by the same laws he did when time began? If so, then is it not possible that there may be spirit visitations to this earth as long as it shall stand or time shall last? Do you think that the power of God lessens with passing centuries? or that phenomena he once ordained shall exist no longer? If you will turn to Ecclesiastes in the Book I mentioned to you, in chapter iii., verses 14, 15, you will find the following significant language:—

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

"That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

It cannot truthfully be denied that it "*hath been*" that spirit manifestations were among the every-day occurrences of life; hundreds of instances are recorded in both *profane and sacred history*.

In the second book of Maccabees it is said that the high priest Onias and the prophet Jeremiah appeared to Judas Maccabeus. Also in Matthew xvii., Moses and Elias appeared to Peter, James and John; and in the twenty-seventh chapter of the same book, verse 52, you will read:—

“And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.”

I could fill pages with narrations of like events recorded in the Scriptures, and yet your wisdom sneers at their possibilities.

Let me call your especial attention to another peculiar fact recorded in the Bible. On a careful perusal of it you will learn that the spirits of ancient times were very like those of the present day; *i.e.*, that they did not always duly consider the veracity of their statements when they made them. A notable instance of this kind is mentioned in 2 Chronicles, chapter xviii., wherein is related that one Ahab, king of Israel, proposed to capture Ramoth-gilead. And the king called together four hundred of his prophets: “And they said, Go up: for God will deliver it into the king’s hand.”

Notwithstanding this prophecy, Ahab had grave doubts as to whether his amiable intentions towards Ramoth-gilead would meet with success; and he sent a messenger for one Micaiah, a noted and truthful prophet.

“And when he was come to the king, the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle? And he said, Go ye up and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand.

“And the king said unto him, I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth.

“Then Micaiah said, I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left.

“And the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab the king of Israel, that he may go up to Ramoth-gilead?

“And one spake after this manner, and another saying after that manner.

“Then there came out a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said, Wherewith?

“I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets, and the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, go out and do even so.”

This is a simple, plain narration of a fact in the Bible, as clearly and concisely stated as the story of the building of the ark, or the tower of Babel. The lying spirit told his story to Ahab; the king believed it, went up to Ramoth-gilead, and was slain in the battle.

I have been thus prolix in my quotation for fear that the members of your Commission may never have read the story, and yet it is only one of very many relations of “spirit visitations” to be found within the sacred pages. In fact, gentlemen, I can recommend the whole Book to your favorable notice. Read it at your leisure; you will find it entertaining. It is a great pity you had not read it before making your report, for I believe it would have changed its conclusions very materially. You would have seen that many things were possible that you evidently believe could not happen. Besides, you would have learned in it some lessons in Christian charity that would have benefited you in the future.

In my first letter to you I called your attention to the narration of a number of spirit visitations to be found in the New Testament; therefore I will not recapitulate them, — only referring you to a little incident related by Paul in Acts xvi. 16, which has just occurred to my mind. The apostle says: “And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.” Gentlemen, do you believe that any damsel ever had a spirit of *divination*? Or, in other words, was

this one a medium? Of course you don't; you think she was a juggler in crinoline, — or whatever damsels wore at that day, — or that she was an impostor, and deceived the people with her pretended powers. That will not do, gentlemen, unless you knew the girl better than Paul did, for after she had followed him and Silas "*many days*," Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, "I command thee to come out of her." And he came out the same hour.

And the master of the girl was angry with Paul and Silas for spoiling a medium, and destroying their hope of gains; and they arrested them and took them before a magistrate, and they were sent to prison, from whence they were miraculously delivered.

Again, in speaking of "*spiritual gifts*," the apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians — chap. xii. 1, 7, 9, 10 — says: —

"Now concerning *spiritual gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

"But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

"To another, faith, by the same spirit; to another the gifts of healing.

"To another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, *discerning of spirits*; to another, *divers* kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues."

Now Paul was the most learned among the disciples, and of course knew whereof he spake. But I will not take time to refer you to any more particular instances of spirit visitations, or of reference thereto in the Bible and Testament. I have only gone so far in hopes that I might excite your curiosity to such an extent as to induce you to read them. I can assure you that if there is any one fact more often stated in Holy Writ than another, it is that of spirit manifestations and visitations. From

Genesis to Revelation the Book is full of the narration of such events, very many of them far exceeding in wonder anything that Professors Zöllner, Crookes, Wallace, Wagner, Butlerof, or any other of the many European scientists who have investigated spirit manifestations ever witnessed. Perhaps I should inform you gentlemen that there are two editions of the Bible and Testament: one is called the "Old," and the other the *revised* edition. I like the former much the best, as there are some beautiful passages in it that are omitted in the latter. You can procure either of them at any ordinary bookstore, at a price within the reach of all.

One peculiarity of this Book is that its stories never grow old; age does not impair their interest, neither does the attrition of oft-repeated tongues render them

"Weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable."

The story of the awful tragedy that was enacted on Mount Calvary over eighteen hundred years ago, has not yet grown old; and although it has been repeated by a pious ministry all over the civilized world for almost two thousand years, yet to the humble, penitent sinner at the foot of the altar that story is as new and as full of interest as it was to the people of Nazareth in the morning of Christianity. And yet not a new fact or incident has been added to it that was not known to the shepherds that fed their flocks on the plains of Judea, or the humble fishermen of Galilee. The learned logic and most eloquent rhetoric of the ablest divines have been unable to add anything to the beauty and effectiveness of that simple story so often repeated, —

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." — John iii. 16.

Gentlemen, you will observe that in that sacred promise there is no interdiction of a belief in spirits; the fact is, that their visitations and ministrations were so frequent in those days that the belief in them was the common conviction of the people who lived contemporary with the Saviour and his disciples. Yet it is a singular fact that the ministry of to-day seems to fear both the manifestation and ministration. The good clergy of the nineteenth century are like the historic boy, who, while he was not afraid of ghosts, yet, to keep up his spirits, always whistled very loud when he passed by a graveyard.

While I would always speak with the utmost respect of the ministry and their holy mission, yet it does seem to an unworthy observer that they very often make a terrible grimace when disposing of a gnat, while they gorge a camel with astonishing ease and facility.

And it is better so, perhaps, than otherwise. They are often, and very properly, represented as faithful shepherds, whose duty it is to carefully guard the flocks their Master has given them to keep; and over-watchfulness is better than negligence in their guardianship. Sometimes they are a little over-zealous, it is true; yet it is a noble failing, and, though it may cause the unthinking to sometimes smile, yet they deserve all honor for their untiring faithfulness.

When I was a child, my father lived in the wilds of Southern Indiana. Most of the early settlers kept a few sheep, whose fleece was necessary for their winter clothing. The wilderness was filled with wolves, and during the winter the farmers had to "fold their sheep." This fold was only a high rail fence, enclosing fifty or a hundred feet square of ground, in which were placed sheds for the sheep and a kennel for a watch-dog. The wolves would never enter a fold wherein was one of these faithful guardians.

My father had a noble dog, celebrated for his courage and watchfulness. He was the friend and playmate of my childhood, as well as my guardian from the dangers that lurked in the woods around my early home. How dearly I did love him, and well can I remember his loving salute on my cheek, as I kissed his *sonsie* face, while my little arms could hardly encompass his shaggy neck!

“ His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
 Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
 But whalpit some place far abroad,
 Where sallors gang to fish for cod.”

Dear old “ Brave ”! how I loved him, and how I mourned over his grave! and whenever I think of him, I cannot but admit and admire the justice of the hope and faith of the Indian, —

“ Who thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.”

One fault, and one only had Brave, and that was his over-zeal in well-doing, his over-watchfulness of the sheep and lambs. I well remember one winter night we were awakened by his angry barking, which continued for some time. In the morning my father went to the fold, — to relieve him from his guard during the day, — expecting to find evidence of the visitation of the dreaded wolves. But on the snow he saw only a few rabbit tracks. Old Brave was determined that the rabbits should not devour his sheep that night, hence his loud and angry protest against their presence.

Since my open letter to you, Gentlemen of the Seybert Committee, I have been preached *at* by several good Christian ministers, who at the same time have preached *against* Spiritualism with great zeal and undaunted courage. They are determined to protect their flock from any blood-thirsty *Rodents* that may threaten them. Now

I would not say one word against the ministers. Some of them are my warm friends, and as a class I like them very much—I am afraid better than they do me. Their calling is a noble one, and faithfully do most of them follow in the footsteps of their divine Master. If they have one fault, it is very like that of noble old Brave; they sometimes mistake a “rabbit” for a wolf. But they generally speak of the arduous labors of your Commission in terms of unlimited praise, and of your conclusions as rivalling the wisdom of Solomon. While they will not permit any one to touch with the sacrilegious fingers of *wit* and *sarcasm* their religion, yet the conscientious belief of the twenty millions of Spiritualists in the world is to them but —

“As sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

Most reverend and worthy ministers of our revered religion, is it not possible for you to exercise a little more charity towards the faith of your fellow-men? to respect more the earnest convictions of others, as you would ask that respect in return? Remember we are all travelling towards the same goal, and must eventually meet the same destiny. “To err is human, to forgive is divine.” It is not the act alone that constitutes crime, but the motive that prompted the act; and in judging the conduct of your fellow-men would it not be Christian-like to exercise more charity and less vindictiveness? Is it possible that you believe that all who differ with you in their Christian belief are on the broad road to ruin; and that your path alone leads to everlasting life? Remember that

“In Faith and Hope the world will disagree,
But all mankind’s concern is Charity.”

Gentlemen of the Seybert Commission, should you conclude to purchase and peruse the Book I have recom-

mended to you, as you carefully read it, suppose you tear out every leaf on which you find an allusion, either to spirit manifestations, or to spirit ministrations. Lay these leaves carefully aside, and then compare them with nearly empty covers that will remain, and I have no doubt that you will be surprised. Then compare the contents of the torn pages with the remainder of the original, and you will find that the very essence and soul of the Book is in the mutilated leaves; that what remains in the binding will be but the chaff left after the wheat is winnowed and separated therefrom.

Remember that the Spiritualists do not propose to surrender the possession of the Bible to the orthodox churches without resistance; and should the latter obtain surreptitious possession of it and refuse to deliver it up on demand,—if the Spiritualists should bring an action of trover and conversion or a writ of replevin for it, they could obtain a verdict in their favor before any honest, intelligent jury in the land; even if all the members of your Commission should appear on the witness-stand against them, and under oath relate your marvellous experience and profound investigations, as published in your report.

CHAPTER VI.

“In my Father's house are many mansions.”

John xiv. 2.

GENTLEMEN: On page 116 of your report you say that the purport of these slate communications you received, “was in some instances the veriest twaddle, while others contained tolerably good sense, *even in language rather above the medium*, unless appearances were misleading, for they looked the embodiment of ignorant simplicity, and spoke far from grammatically”; and on many other pages of your report, by words, and interrogation points inclosed in parenthesis, you sneer at the spelling and bad grammar of the so-called “spirit communications.” Admit that this is even so, — yet how does that account for the *physical phenomena* witnessed by hundreds at Cassadaga Lake? You were not appointed to investigate grammar or orthography, but phenomena that hundreds and thousands have seen and could not understand; — and to attempt to evade, in your investigations, the main facts in the case, by raising unimportant collateral issues, is what lawyers call pettifogging, and we do not call those who indulge in it *commissioners*. What do you know of spirit life? Have you any idea what it is, or what change that incomprehensible thing we call the human mind undergoes, when it casts off its worn and diseased habiliments of clay and puts on the celestial robes of the spirit world? I see among your Commission the names of a number of learned doctors and professors; but, with all your learning, what do you know of that future realm beyond the unknown river? Remember that of man's

future destiny, the learned priest in his robes of office knows no more than the humblest sinner whose tears fall at the foot of the altar. It was not a diploma of learning that opened the gates of paradise to the "wandering Peri," but the tear of a penitent sinner.

Do you believe that the change wrought by death is to all alike? Are there no gradations in the spirit world? Shall we all be alike in every attribute of mind? Will the little child by one bound become a Demosthenes; the uneducated savage a Newton? Will the Hottentots immediately after death stand upon the same intellectual plane with the members of the "Seybert Commission"? Does the dead savant of past ages know no more in the other world than the ignorant clodhopper who dies to-day? If so, then in our Father's house there is only one mansion, and St. John was mistaken.

If all were alike in intellect and knowledge in the spirit world, society there would be very monotonous indeed. One of the greatest pleasures of intellectual life comes from the interchange of ideas. We are all constantly learning from each other in our intercourse, and by our varied attainments amuse and instruct our fellows, while we in turn receive instruction from them. Imagine, if you can, a concourse of spirits in the spirit world who have met together in social intercourse: all are constructed on the same plan; all on the same plane of intellect and culture; all equally skilled in science, music, and the arts; all equally learned in history, and equally acquainted with the secrets recorded in the vast volume of nature. Educated in some mysterious manner by the agonies of death, all are graduates in Heavenly lore, all possessed of the *same* knowledge, and consequently the same ideas, the same tastes and desires, all engaged in the same employment; no progress, no emulation, no ambition to become better or wiser, no amusements or

pastimes but those as old as the centuries, — one dread, dreary monotony of shiftless indolence ; no friendly *gossip* or interchange of ideas, for every spirit knows as much as another, and could only tell what everybody knew before. Why Dante's *Inferno* would be a paradise compared with such a dreary sameness.

Imagine a social party convened on earth for amusement ; all are exactly alike in attributes of mind, taste, and knowledge ; — what could they do to while away the passing hours ? I cannot conceive, unless they should repeat to each other the multiplication table, or the tables of weights and measures, or other mutually understood scientific or literary subjects. This and its parallels would inevitably be human intercourse, if there were no gradations of intellect, knowledge, tastes, and acquirements. And if there is a gradation in the spirit world, who can tell how high or how low are the intellectual capacities included within its two extremes ? What would you expect then from spirit communications, but the lowest as well as the highest of intellectual manifestations ?

Who would take future life as a gift from on high, if nothing were to be learned in the long, long centuries to come ? No ! no ! the very philosophy of life contradicts the absurdity. As the alphabet is to English literature, so must the knowledge we attain here be to that we shall learn in the great school of the future. Were it otherwise, our knowledge *acquired by death* in the end would be like the instincts of insect and animal life, where every individual member of a class knows no more and no less than all of his fellows. Thus the bee of modern times constructs the cells of its hive and extracts its honey by precisely the same process as do all his fellow-laborers, and as did the bee of remotest antiquity ; while each species of bird builds its nest after the same unalterable pattern, and warbles the same unvarying melody.

The ancient idea that the pleasures and happiness of spirit life consisted in drinking milk and honey, and playing on musical instruments around a glittering throne has died out with the ignorance of the past, and we now conceive of more rational enjoyments in heaven; where minds are as varied as they are on earth, where there is always something yet to learn, and teachers to instruct those who do not know.

Why should not there be ignorant spirits in the other world, as there are in this? and besides, gentlemen, with all your profound knowledge, I doubt very much if you know whether Kirkham or Murray is the standard of grammar of the great by-and-by,—or Webster or Worcester the acknowledged authority in orthography. Never mind the spelling or the grammar, gentlemen, but explain how the wonderful communications are received, and from whence they come.

As to the varied conditions of spirit life, and its probabilities, I cannot do better than to quote from a sermon by that eloquent divine, Dr. Talmage, as it is reported in the *Day Star* of September, 1887.

OCCUPATION OF SPIRITS.—EMPLOYMENTS IN HEAVEN.

MEN WILL DO IN HEAVEN WHAT IN THEIR BEST MOMENTS
THEY DID ON EARTH.

[VIEWS OF DR. TALMAGE.]

There are times when the erratic Talmage rises above himself, and breathes a pure inspiration which comes like a breath from heaven. His sermon on "Employments in Heaven" was of this order, and freed from a few phrases from the old methods of thought, no spirit from the courts of heaven itself could convey in language more accurately the employments of the future life. He says:—

“The question is often silently asked, though perhaps never audibly pronounced, ‘What are our departed Christian friends doing now?’ The question is more easily answered than you might perhaps suppose.

“You have, then, only a sum in subtraction and a sum in addition to decide what are the employments of our departed friends in the better world. You are to subtract from them all earthly grossness, and then you are to come to the conclusion that they are doing now in heaven what in their best moments they did on earth. The reason so many people never start for heaven is because they could not stand it if they got there, if it should turn out to be the rigid and formal place some people photographed it.

“I am not going to speculate in regard to the future world, but I must by inevitable laws of inference and deduction and common sense conclude that in heaven we will be just as different from each other as we are now different, and hence that there will be at least as many different employments in the celestial world as there are employments here.

“In the first place, I remark that all those of our departed Christian friends who on earth found great joy in fine arts are now indulging their tastes in the same direction. On earth they had their gladdest pleasures amid pictures and statuary, and in the study of the laws of light and shade and perspective. Have you any idea that that affluence of faculty at death collapsed and perished? Why so, when there is more for them to look at, and they have keener appreciation of the beautiful, and they stand amid the very looms where the sunsets and the rainbows and the spring mornings are woven?

“Raphael could improve on his masterpiece of Michael the Archangel now that he has seen him, and could improve on his masterpiece of the Holy Family now that he has visited them. Michael Angelo could better present the Last Judgment after he has seen its flash and heard the rumbling battering-rams of its thunder. Exquisite colors here, graceful lines there, powerful chiaroscuro here; but I am persuaded that the grander studies and brighter galleries are higher up by the winding marble stairs of the sepulchre, and that Turner and Holman Hunter, and Rembrandt, and Titian, and Paul Veronese, if they exercised saving faith in the Christ whom they portrayed upon the canvas, are painters yet, but their strength of faculty multiplied ten thou-

sand fold. The reason that God took away their eye and their hand and their brain was that he might give them something more limber, more wieldy, more skilful, more multipliant.

“I remark again, that all our departed Christian friends, who in this world were passionately fond of music are still regaling that taste in the world celestial. The Bible says so much about the music of heaven.”

Spiritualists are often accused of taking too materialistic views of the spirit world; listen to the great preacher:—

“Again I remark that those of our departed Christian friends who in this world had very strong military spirit are now in armies celestial and out on bloodless battle. There are hundreds of people born soldiers. They cannot help it. They belong to regiments in time of peace. They cannot hear the drum or fife without trying to keep step to the music. They are Christians, and when they fight they fight on the right side. Now, when these our Christian friends, who had natural and powerful military spirit, entered heaven, they entered the celestial army.

“I have not so much faith in the army on the ground as I have in the army in the air. O God, open our eyes that we may see them. The military spirits that went up from earth to join the military spirits before the throne—Joshua, and Caleb, and Gideon, and David, and Samson, and the hundreds of Christian warriors who on earth fought with fleshy arm, and now have gone up on high, are now coming down the hills of heaven ready to fight among the invisibles. Yonder they are—coming, coming. Did you not hear them as they swept by?

“What are our departed Christian friends who are explorers doing now? Exploring yet, but with lightning locomotion, with vision microscopic and telescopic at the same time. A continent at a glance. A world in a second. A planetary system in a day. Christian John Franklin no more in disabled Erebus pushing towards the North Pole, Christian De Long no more trying to free blockaded Jeannette from the ice, Christian Livingston no more amid African malaras trying to make revelation of a dark continent; but all of them, in the twinkling of an eye, taking in that which was unapproachable.

“What are our departed friends who found their chief joy in study doing now? Studying yet, but instead of a few thousand volumes on a few shelves, all the volumes of the universe open before them—geologic, ornithologic, conchologic, botanic, astro-

nomie, philosophic. No more need of Leyden jars, or voltaic piles, or electric batteries, standing, as they do, face to face with the facts of the universe.

“What are the historians doing now? Studying history yet, but not the history of a few centuries of our planet only, but the history of eternities—whole millenniums before Xenophon, or Herodotus, or Moses, or Adam was born: history of one world, history of all worlds.

“What are our departed astronomers doing? Studying astronomy yet, but not through the dull lens of earthly observatory, but with one stroke of wing going right out to Jupiter and Mars and Mercury and Saturn and Orion and the Pleiades—overtaking and passing swiftest comet in their flight. Herschel died a Christian. Have you any doubt about what Herschel is doing?

“What are our departed Christian friends, who in this world had their joy in the healing art, doing now? Busy at their old business. No sickness in heaven, but plenty of sickness on earth, plenty of wounds in the different parts of God’s dominion to be healed and to be medicated. You cannot understand why that patient got well after all the skilful doctors in New York and Brooklyn had said that he must die. Perhaps Abercrombie touched him—Abercrombie who, after many years of doctoring the bodies and the souls of people in Scotland, went up to God in 1844.

“Most of those ministers have their people around them already. When I get to heaven,—as by the grace of God I am destined to go to that place,—I will come and see you all. Yea, I will come to all the people to whom I have administered in the Gospel, and to the millions of souls to whom, through the kindness of the printing press, I am permitted to preach every week, in this land and in other lands—letters coming from New Zealand and the uttermost parts of the earth, as well as from near nations, telling me of the souls I have helped—I will visit them all. I give them fair notice. Our departed friends of the ministry are engaged in that delectable entertainment now.

“What are our departed Christian friends, who in all departments of usefulness were busy, finding their chief joy in doing good—what are they doing now? Going right on with the work. John Howard visiting dungeons; the dead women of Northern and Southern battle-fields are still abroad looking for the wounded; George Peabody still watching the poor; Thomas Clarkson still

looking after the enslaved—all of those who did good on earth busier than before. The tombstone is not the terminus, but the starting-post."

Certainly a spirit has touched the lips of the preacher.

Gentlemen, I write to inform you of a fact of which you seem to be entirely ignorant; *i.e.*, "THE WORLD MOVES." As surprising as this statement may appear to you, it is, nevertheless, a stubborn truth; the time of bigotry and intolerance is past. The great mass of civilized and enlightened mankind, individually, think for themselves, and they form their opinions from evidence as it is presented and impressed on their individual understandings; dogmas and creeds are fast losing their binding influence on the human mind; priest-craft no longer fetters reason, and dares not attempt to abridge the liberty of thought; and you might as well attempt

To stem a stream with sand,
Or fetter flame with flaxen band,"

as to check the progress of belief in "Modern Spiritualism." Not only do you find it mingling its cheering hopes and promises with the teachings from orthodox pulpits, but men of genius in the literary world kneel reverently at its shrine; science has bowed before its mysteries, while the public prints of the day do not hesitate to present its claims before the people.

I copy the following significant article from a daily paper of very large circulation, and I commend it to your consideration.

A PASSAGE WORTH PRESERVING.

The world is always grateful to a stout-hearted and lofty-minded man or woman who makes an unusually good case against the terrors of death. Especially is this true when the plea for peace and happiness beyond the grave is put upon broad grounds that appeal to every fine soul's instinctive sympathies.

And when such a declaration of faith is made by a man revered for his unquestioned genius and loved by a multitude of admirers, the good gift made to the world is all the better and more highly prized.

In a letter published in the October number of *Scribner's Magazine*, for the first time, Thackeray performs this great service to his fellow-men. The beauty and power of a passage relating to death mark it as one of the finest flashes of his genius, and a gem well worth preserving. We reproduce it herewith:—

“I don't pity anybody who leaves the world, not even a fair young girl in her prime; I pity those remaining. On her journey, if it pleases God to send her, depend on it there's no cause for grief; that's but an earthly condition. Out of our stormy life, and brought nearer the divine light and warmth, there must be a serene climate. Can't you fancy sailing into the calm? Would you care about going on the voyage, but for the dear souls left on the other shore? But we shan't be parted from them, no doubt, though they are from us. Add a little more intelligence to that which we possess even as we are, and why shouldn't we be with our friends though ever so far off? . . . Why, presently, the body removed, shouldn't we personally be anywhere at will,—properties of creation, like the electric something (sparks is it?) that thrills all round the globe simultaneously? and if round the globe, why not *Ueberall*? and the body being removed or elsewhere disposed of and developed, sorrow and its opposite, crime and the reverse, ease and disease, desire and dislike, etc., go along with the body; a lucid intelligence remains; perception ubiquitous.”

Do not think for a moment, gentlemen, that you can “report” Modern Spiritualism out of existence. Why, but yesterday it was a baby plant; to-day it is a magnificent oak, beneath whose refreshing shades millions are reposing; yesterday it was a glimmering spark; to-day it is a beacon light, throwing its rays far beyond the darkness of the tomb; illuminating the once dread and dreary unknown with the cheering light of hope and faith. No other Christian belief affords *its* certainty of fulfilment, no other faith demonstrates *its* truth to the doubting mind so clearly and conclusively as does “MODERN SPIRITUALISM.”

CHAPTER VII.

“A goodly apple rotten at the heart, —
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!”

SHAKESPEARE.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”

Exodus xx. 16.

To the member of your Commission who wrote that portion of your report entitled

“THE SLADE-ZÖLLNER INVESTIGATION,”

this chapter is most respectfully dedicated. Your Commission as a body is only responsible for it in so far as they have endorsed it and sanctioned it, by giving it the *immortality* incident to your investigation and report. I will not take the time to notice all of its misrepresentations or the manifest motives that prompted them. I will leave that to an abler pen than mine, and will refer the reader as well as your Commission to the very able letter of C. C. Massey, — to whom you refer in your report, — and whose positive denial of nearly all your statements makes it a simple question of veracity between one member of your Commission and an intimate friend of Professor Zöllner, who translated his work.

I will only give your summary of your investigation of the experiments of this eminent German scientist, that my readers may better understand Mr. Massey's letter, and how fully you are contradicted therein.

SUMMARY.

On page 114 of your report you say : —

“Thus it would appear that of the four eminent men whose names have made famous the investigation, there is reason to

believe one, *Zöllner*, was of unsound mind at the time, and anxious for experimental verification of an already accepted hypothesis; another, *Fechner*, was partly blind, and believed because of *Zöllner's* observations; a third, *Scheibner*, was also afflicted with defective vision, and not entirely satisfied in his own mind as to the phenomena; and a fourth, *Weber*, was advanced in age, and did not even recognize the disabilities of his associates. No one of these men had ever had experiences of this sort before, nor was any one of them acquainted with the ordinary possibilities of deception. *The experience of our Commission with Dr. Slade would suggest, that the lack of such knowledge on their part was unfortunate.*

“A consideration of all these circumstances places, it seems to me, this famous investigation in a somewhat new light, and any estimate of *Zöllner's* testimony, based merely upon the eminence in science of his name and those of his collaborators, neglecting to give attention to their disqualifications for this kind of work, cannot be a fair or a true estimate.

“In concluding this Report, I give sincere thanks to all of these gentlemen for their courtesy and frankness — a frankness which has alone made it possible for me to collect this evidence; and which, considering the nature of the evidence, must be regarded as most generous. To Professor *Scheibner*, especially, my thanks are due for the trouble he has taken in helping me to make my notes exact and truthful. “GEO. S. FULLERTON.”

Surely the men who were with Professor *Zöllner* in many of the *Slade* experiments; who saw them and could not account for them, but who stated that they did not believe them to be jugglery at the time they witnessed them; and who, as you say, treated you so generously; surely, these gentlemen must feel grateful to you for publishing their mental and physical disabilities to the world. The learned scientist, Professor *Zöllner*, is dead; he is out of the reach of your cruel calumny, and cannot contradict your misrepresentations. So far as he is concerned you are as safe as were the animals in the fable of *Æsop* that assaulted the dying lion with horns and hoofs.

But, fortunately for the memory of this great physicist, he has a living friend who appears upon the witness-stand against you, and I submit his disinterested testimony to the jury of the public, without the least doubt as to what the verdict will be. The innate sense of justice in mankind can always be depended upon to shield the memory of the dead from either slanderous tongue or libelous pen; the familiar maxim "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*" is as old as civilization, and few men have the hardihood to disregard its teachings.

AN OPEN LETTER

TO PROFESSOR GEORGE S. FULLERTON,

*Of the University of Pennsylvania, Member and Secretary of the
Seybert Commission for Investigating Modern Spiritualism,*

BY C. C. MASSEY,

Of Lincoln's Inn, London.

DEAR SIR: A few days ago I accidentally heard that the Preliminary Report, of what is known as the "Seybert Commission," contained a reference by yourself to a conversation we had here one day in August of last year, that being the only occasion on which I have had the pleasure of meeting you. Having now seen the Report, I feel obliged to make some observations upon the passage in it to which my attention was called, as it is rather prejudicial to the character for careful statement which I endeavour to deserve. I propose also — this letter being intended for publication — to trouble you with some further remarks on the question dealt with in this part of the Report.

At pages 110, 111 you say:—

"As to Professor Zöllner . . . (1) The question of his mental condition at the time of the investigation [with Slade]. It is asserted by his English translator, Mr. Massey, that he was of sound mind. I inquired of Mr. Massey, when in London, upon what authority he makes this statement; and found that it

is based upon a letter from a Spiritistic correspondent of Zöllner, and upon no other authority."

I read the above with surprise, arising less from its actual inaccuracy, and from its very misleading character, than from the fact that such use should have been made of our conversation, without any opportunity having been offered me of correcting your impressions of it, or of adding any information to my answers to any (apparently to me) quite informal and casual questions you may have put to me during your call here. I have, indeed, no recollection of your putting to me, directly, any questions at all; whatever was said by me seeming to arise simply and spontaneously in the course of our conversation. I had no intimation that your visit to me had any more particular object than an interchange of courtesy—I having left a card at your lodgings a few days before—and in contesting, as I did, the opinion you appeared to have formed that Zöllner was insane, I was much more impressed with the inherent weakness of the evidence for that conclusion, than with the necessity for answering it by counter evidence. You did not convey to me the impression that you wanted from me a full and deliberate statement of the grounds of my belief in Zöllner's sanity. How little this seemed to be the case is apparent from a circumstance which I remember with some distinctness. I had referred, not to "a letter from a Spiritistic correspondent of Zöllner," but to a very explicit statement in a published work, by Baron Hellenbach, a man of literary distinction in Austria. I took the book from a shelf, and began turning over the leaves to find the passage. I could not at once succeed, and not observing that you seemed to be interested, I flung the volume aside, I think with some remark to the effect that I would not waste the time of a visit I much esteemed in hunting through a book. Our conversation was also to some extent interrupted by the entrance of another visitor. I may or may not have told you that, besides Hellenbach's testimony, I had also seen the statement of a gentleman (a "Spiritist," it is true), not a "correspondent" of Zöllner, but residing at Leipzig, and in somewhat intimate relations with Zöllner for some weeks before the latter's sudden death, and who, writing just after that event, described Zöllner as having been in excellent health and spirits, and full mental activity, a few days before,—a statement not in allusion to the report of his "insanity," for that seems only to

have taken tangible shape at a later date, and in obedience to polemical exigencies. But had you said that you wished to make use of any evidence I could give, or refer you to, on the point, you would have been fully and exactly informed to the best of my ability.

When "insanity" is alleged, without qualification, as a ground for putting aside the recorded observations and statements of an eminent scientific man, one understands to be meant some definite stage of mental disease which would be recognized by medical science as actual unsoundness of mind, unfitting the patient for intellectual work, or subjecting him to hallucinations which he could not detect to be such; not merely some possibly inducing cause or tendency, as, for instance, an excitable temperament. Now it has not been even suggested, as far as I am aware, that Zöllner's state was ever such as to lead his friends to seek for medical advice or opinion about his mental condition; nor is it denied that he continued to hold his public position in the University of Leipzig, where he resided, to the hour of his death. These circumstances would of themselves, in my judgment, justify positive denial of an unqualified statement of Zöllner's "insanity." What you call my assertion that Zöllner was of sound mind has always—on the two or three occasions of my publicly referring to the matter—taken the form of a denial of reports of this gross and palpable character, having nothing to do with difficult questions of incipient disturbance of perfect mental equilibrium by emotional states. I had to deal with such statements, for instance, as that of Dr., or Professor, Cyon, the German physiologist, who, writing in the *Contemporary Review* three or four years ago, said that Zöllner was "insane" for some time before his death, "and died mad"! Such reports, in Zöllner's case, stank of polemical and personal animus, which Zöllner had excited, not only by his testimony to facts against which the whole dominant mode of thought was deeply committed, but also by his strenuous denunciation of certain practices, horrible to the unsophisticated and sensitive mind, but fanatically defended. The scientific sense of the Germans quickly understood that mere criticism would be eventually impotent against a record of experiments which, to quote the words of one of the foremost leaders of German thought, who has come forward to refute the "Spiritistic" explanation of the facts, "are excellently contrived, give the best conceivable security against con-

juring, show everywhere the skilled hand of an accomplished experimenter, and are reported with clearness and precision.”¹ The “short way” with Spiritists, who are unfortunately also men of science, is to declare them mad! And in Zöllner’s case this imputation received color from, and probably was merely suggested by, the circumstance that a brother and sister—two out of a family of nine—had actually been thus afflicted. Zöllner himself mentions this fact in an “Open Letter” to one of his chief opponents—the very Professor Wundt whose testimony you adduce without reference to the fact of his controversial relations with Zöllner.² But no one can read of the personal insults and contumelies and estrangements which followed the publication of the investigation with Slade without being sure that such provocations, acting on that highly strung nature, must inevitably have overthrown a really delicate balance, and developed any latent tendencies to insanity in a far more marked degree than is even alleged by any witness who condescends to particulars. “Particulars,” indeed, rightly speaking, we have none whatever from anybody! Of the “evidence” you collected at Leipzig I shall have something to say before closing this letter. But first let me quote the statement of Baron Hellenbach, upon which my own was partly—and but partly—founded, and which you could have referred to for yourself had you been sufficiently interested to have asked me for the title of the book I was examining in your presence, or to have requested me to persevere in my search for the passage I wanted to show you. And I will next add some information as to the intellectual reputation of this witness in his own country and Germany, from which you may judge whether he can be suitably dismissed with the anonymous description, “a Spiritistic correspondent of Zöllner.”

The book I quote from is entitled *Geburt und Tod als Wechsel der Anschauungsform, oder der Doppel-Natur des Menschen*. Von

¹ E. von Hartmann, *Der Spiritismus*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1885. I quote from my translation, published in London the same year, by express authority of the author.

² *Wiss. Abh.*, Bd. III., s. 37. The mention of this fact by Zöllner is not in connection with any reports concerning his own mental condition, but with impressive relevance to the history of his early opinions. The fact had, however, already been made use of, for the purpose of insult, by one of the “friends” who turned against him.

L. B. Hellenbach. Wien. 1885. Wilhelm Braumüller.¹ After severely characterizing Zöllner's assailants, the author says, p. 96 (the parts here underlined being emphasized in the type of the original):—"—und da sich so viele diesem Herren nicht scheuten, Zöllner als verrückt oder irrsinnig zu erklären, so erkläre ich, dass ich mit dieser Manne oft verkehrte, dass ich in Correspondenz mit ihm stand, deren Gegenstand in der letzten Epoche meine 'Magie der Zahlen,' also ein ernstes und tiefes Thema war, über welches ich wenige Tage vor seinem Tode noch einen Brief erhielt, und dass auch nicht ein Schein von Berechtigung für obige Behauptung vorliegt. Zöllner hatte eine grosse Schnelligkeit des Denkens, eine übergrosse Lebhaftigkeit des Geistes, war in der letzteren Zeit tief verletzt und verbittert durch die Handlungsweise seiner Collegen, deren Angriffe er zu grosse Bedeutung beilegte (was ich ihm wiederholt sagte, und ihm auch schrieb, dass sie seiner Zeit und Beschäftigung nicht werth seien); aber Zöllner war geistig gesund bis zu sienem letzten Athemzuge." ("—but since so many of these gentlemen have not shrunk from declaring that Zöllner was deranged or insane, I declare that I was in frequent intercourse with this man, that I was in correspondence with him, latterly on the subject of my *Magic of Numbers*—thus a serious and deep topic—on which I received a letter from him a few days before his death, and that there was not even the semblance of justification for the above allegation. Zöllner had great quickness of thought, an over-great vivacity of spirit, and he was latterly deeply wounded and embittered by the treatment of his colleagues, to whose attacks he gave too much importance (I said to him repeatedly, and also wrote to him, that they were not worth his time and consideration), but Zöllner was of sound mind to his latest breath.")

(You will observe from the above passage that the writer of it was not only a "correspondent" of Zöllner, but a friend who had conversed with him at a time when we are asked to believe that he was insane.) Now this witness, the author of *Die Vorurtheile der Menschheit, Eine Philosophie des gesunden Menschenverstandes, Der Individualismus im Lichte der Biologie und Philosophie*, etc., is a man of even brilliant attainments. He was

¹ An English translation of this book, *Birth and Death*, etc., by "V.," was published in London last year. The Psychological Press Association, 16 Craven Street, W.C.

described in one of the principal German newspapers—the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Vienna—as “completely equipped with modern learning” (mit dem ganzen Rüstzeuge des modernen Wissens ausgestattet).¹ And E. von Hartmann refers to him as possessing also just those qualities of the “Weltmann” which are perhaps least in accordance with the popular conception of a “Spiritist.”²

I think I have sufficiently shown that your slight, but obvious suggestion of levity of statement on my part has not been made with due care. A more interesting question is whether the opinions—I cannot call them evidence—you have collected at Leipzig afford any reasonable ground for suspecting the accuracy of Zöllner's reports.

I think every sensible and impartial person will put aside Professor Wundt's wild, undefined, and evidently prejudiced statement that Zöllner was “decidedly not in his right mind at the time” (of the investigations with Slade). You do not seem to have tested it by any sort of cross-examination, but you “would regard it as of special value,” for the reason that Wundt “is by profession an experimental psychologist.” It is not a privilege peculiar to experimental psychologists to discover that an opponent in controversy is insane, and as it does not seem to have occurred to you to ask this expert, who, you nevertheless admit, “might naturally be inclined to underrate Zöllner,” the grounds of his opinion, we may safely assume that experimental psychology had very little to do with it, and prejudice and animus a great deal. We have had some experience of that sort of thing here in England. It is not many years since another expert, another “experimental psychologist,” an alienist of repute, of whom one might have presumed that “his profession would not permit him to speak hastily upon this topic,” informed the public, through the *Standard* newspaper, that there were 10,000 Spiritualists in lunatic asylums in the United States of America! This incredibly gross misstatement, made with the reckless credulity of intense prejudice, was of course instantly disproved by statistics, and brought (if I remember rightly) upon the physician who was guilty of it a grave rebuke from our chief medical journal, *The Lancet*. And for proof of the license, not only of

¹ An article copied into *Psychische Studien*, March, 1884.

² *Der Spiritismus*, s. 17.

speech, but even of responsible action, into which professional prejudice on this subject (even without any coloring from personal animus) can betray men of respectable scientific attainments, I need only point to the results of rather recent actions in our law courts, and to the emphatic censures of some of our most distinguished judges.

Professor Wundt's loose and unexplained general statement is also distinctly opposed to the opinions of the other witnesses cited by yourself. Professor Fechner¹ speaks of what is called in your English notes an emotional derangement, such that he does not consider it to have incapacitated Zöllner as an observer, even supposing it to have existed at all at the date of the experiments, and it was only *from* that time, according to him, that "it was more pronounced." Yes; it was just "from" that time that Zöllner's admittedly very sensitive disposition had to encounter the attacks and provocations of colleagues and others, who certainly did not spare him upon any doubt of his sanity.² Assuming that your English notes, with the word "derangement" therein, quite accurately represent to us Fechner's meaning (and I advert here to the very proper caution of *Professor Scheibner*, who obliged you to use your notes of his testimony on your own responsibility, refusing to set his name to their publication "for the reason that he was not sufficiently familiar with the English³ to judge accurately of the shades of meaning, and thus could not say whether he accurately agreed with the notes as they stand or not")—I should still say that the *fact* Fechner deposes to amounts to nothing more than this, that Zöllner had an excitable temper, which was much aggravated by the annoyance and controversy following upon the publication of his investigations with Slade. And I put forward with some confidence the following view, as the natural, sensible, and probable explanation of the otherwise rather surprising expressions attributed by your notes to Fech-

¹ Italics are mine whenever they occur.

² As, for instance, when his colleague, Professor Ludwig, refused his hand when they met at Weber's house on the 3d of May, 1878, with the remark: "I no longer know you." (*Wiss. Abh.*, Bd. II., 1087.) Had Zöllner acted thus, the circumstance would probably have been appealed to as a proof of his "derangement."

³ Fechner, according to my information, is not acquainted with English, as appears also from the fact that you had to translate your notes to him.

ner and Scheibner, so far as these seem to import anything pathologically abnormal in Zöllner's mental condition. It must have been difficult, I think, for Zöllner's friends to regard any excitement betrayed by him in controversy, or in private intercourse, without reference to the fact of the well-known affliction in his family. What would never have seemed to any one more than irritability, had that circumstance been unknown, almost inevitably connected itself in people's minds with the liability to mental disease which we always (most often causelessly) suspect in those whose families are known to have been thus visited. What in the one case would only be called failure of temper and discretion, would in the other be very probably described as "mental disturbance," or as "emotional derangement." Almost any marked defects of mind or temper might be thus described, but the big phrases appropriate to mental alienation of course cover a great deal more than the actual symptoms. I suggest that if it had been put to Fechner and Scheibner whether they would have applied to Zöllner phrases derogatory to his general sanity had they never heard of his unfortunate brother and sister, they would have bethought themselves that they had in truth jumped to a conclusion for which there was no sufficient warrant in anything within their experience of their friend.

But be that as it may, there can be no doubt whatever as to Fechner's opinion of Zöllner's capacity as an observer in 1877-78; for, writing in 1879, he says: "If Zöllner . . . is regarded as a visionary, who sees what he wishes to see, it should first be asked whether he has ever shown himself to be such in the province of observation, and whether his fine inventions and discoveries, so fruitful for the exact natural sciences, are illusions."¹ You may say that I have no occasion to quote this, because your notes prevent any misapprehension of Fechner's opinion on this point; but the use I make of the above passage is this: that if, in 1879, there was a known doubt as to Zöllner's capacity at the date of his investigations with Slade (1877 and 1878), as against his admittedly great capacity for scientific work in earlier years, Fechner would certainly not have used the above argument without betraying the least consciousness that it begged a notoriously debated question, or that there was any serious suggestion of failure of Zöllner's mental capacity since his earlier work. This

¹ *Die Tagesansicht gegenüber der Nachtsansicht.* 1879.

remark has an evident bearing on your suggestion, speaking of Professor Weber's testimony, that being from Göttingen, Weber may not have had such good opportunities for judging of Zöllner's mental condition as his colleagues at Leipzig. You have adduced no scrap of evidence that *at the date of the investigations with Slade any one of Zöllner's colleagues then doubted his sanity in any sense.*

Now as to Professor Scheibner. To your notes, Scheibner, as already said, refuses to commit himself, on which he is to be congratulated, for they read more like a satire on some absurd attempt to prove a man mad than like anything put seriously forward. However, let us deal with them as if they were signed by Scheibner himself. "Professor Scheibner thinks that the mental disturbance under which Zöllner suffered later might be regarded as, at this time, incipient." Now "the mental disturbance under which Zöllner suffered later" suggests something tolerably definite and positive. But "Professor Scheibner would not say that Zöllner's mental disturbance was pronounced and full-formed, so to speak, *but that it was incipient, and if Zöllner had lived longer would have fully developed.*" So that we have an "incipient" disturbance in 1882 (when Zöllner died), which "might be regarded" as incipient in 1877-78, and a very positive conjecture, in the form of a statement, as to what would have happened had Zöllner lived. Professor Scheibner is a distinguished mathematician, but his authority on questions of mental disease is not so notorious that we can allow him the use of a phrase importing partial insanity, without begging to be informed of the symptoms. He does inform us: "He became more and more given to fixing his attention on a few ideas, and incapable of seeing what was against them. Towards the last he was passionate when criticised." Mercy on us! Is that such a very uncommon result of heated controversy as to be evidence of unsoundness of mind in a pathological sense?

There is some danger that the "few ideas" may be supposed to have related exclusively or chiefly to the Fourth Dimension of Space, and to the verification Zöllner believed that to have obtained through the experiments with Slade. That would be a complete mistake. Zöllner held strong opinions on a variety of controverted questions, and was prominent in them on the side disfavored in scientific and academical circles, and generally by the Press. Now every one knows that the battle against a major-

ity, or against prevailing influences, is far more absorbing, supposes greater enthusiasm, and a consequently more exclusive concentration of attention, than is the case (till the moment when the struggle becomes really critical) with those who know themselves to be of the dominant party. And the temper of the representatives of the minority is far more tried, for the other side is naturally scornful, and assumes airs of superiority. Moreover, when a man of science, or an academician, or a student plunges into exciting controversy (such, for instance, as on the Vivisection question), it is because he has been profoundly moved. When a man of Zöllner's prestige has two such controversies (and there were others) on his hands as Vivisection and Spiritualism, he soon finds that he has brought about him a swarm of hornets, and will have enough to do to brush them away, even if they do not sting him to death.¹ To old friends and former associates his pre-occupation, unavoidable as that has become, easily seems like monomania, especially if they have little sympathy with the impulses and the depth of feeling which actuate him. Friends like Fechner and Scheibner, cooler, perhaps, by temperament, and less personally concerned, may well have thought him, as he may have been, sometimes wrong in the course of these controversies, and then, if he defended himself to them, possibly with vehemence, they would be very likely to go away shaking their heads, reminding each other of the family affliction, and fearing that his insensibility to *their* arguments showed an incapability of seeing what was against him, suggestive of "incipient" aberration! Suppose that Zöllner did fall into the degenerate habit of mind which too often results from incessant controversy, did become less open-minded, more positive and one-sided, and "towards the last, passionate when criticised," what sort of reasoning is it which would, first, antedate these defects of judgment and temper by years, and, secondly, infer that they had already then infected the whole scientific habit and training of his life, so that in the quiet field of pure observation, where there was nothing to cross

¹ Zöllner died quite suddenly, presumably of heart disease. He fell down dead at his writing-desk, shortly after conversing cheerfully with his mother. It seems probable that the agitations of his latterly troubled life may have affected a naturally infirm heart, and accelerated his death.

or perturb him, his senses were hallucinated by bias? In 1881 or 1882 he could not easily see the force of an opponent's argument; *ergo* in 1877 and 1878 he could not see what was going on under his physical eyes! Your witnesses, it is true, do not countenance this suggestion. Fechner expressly negatives it, and the remarks attributed to Scheibner under head 5 of your notes of his testimony, are not connected with any alleged abnormality of Zöllner's state. I shall deal with them presently. Meanwhile, to give the fullest legitimate force to Scheibner's statement, we will suppose that a tendency to excitability and positiveness was to some extent observable in Zöllner in 1877-78.

Many years ago it happened to me to read parts of a well-known professional work: Winslow's *Obscure Diseases of the Brain and Mind*. I remember my consternation at recognizing, in the account of the incipience and progress of cerebral disorder, one after another of my own "symptoms." "Irritability." Yes, I am certainly irritable—sometimes very. "Tingling at the finger-ends." I have felt it often. "Lapses of memory." I am horribly forgetful. "Omission of words in writing." I never can write a letter without it happening. "Singing in the ears." My "case" frequently. And so on. (I daresay I do not remember it all quite rightly, but the above is a typical impression.) The disease of my brain must evidently have already got beyond the incipient stage, as the symptoms had been long observable. In a very few years I should probably be in an asylum. But some twenty years have now elapsed, and here I am, not conspicuously more insane than other people, though the "symptoms" are in full play still. No doubt if I live—long enough—they will be "pronounced" and "fully developed." Meanwhile I have occasionally been amused by comparing notes with others who at some time had read Dr. Winslow's book, and had been similarly alarmed. But I do not think that we should any of us have been made so anxious if all that stuff had been written by a professor of mathematics instead of by a celebrated alienist.

But the third witness on the point now in question, W. Weber—(I do not regard Wundt as a witness, but place him in the same category as Dr. Cyon¹)—next claims our attention.

¹ *Ante*. But only, it must be understood, in this particular. I respect Professor Wundt's philosophical distinction; of the physiologist

Now, when I came to your introductory remarks, at the bottom of page 109, upon your interview with Weber, it required no great astuteness on my part to understand, as I did, before turning over the page, that the testimony of this man, decidedly the most scientifically eminent of all Zöllner's colleagues, was going to prove extremely unfavorable to the view you have taken. He is "eighty-three years old, and does not lecture. He is extremely excitable and somewhat incoherent when excited. I found it difficult to induce him to talk slowly enough, and systematically enough, for me to take my notes." All which, except the incontestable facts that he is eighty-three, and has given up lecturing, comes, I submit, to this: that Weber, whose temper may very likely not have been improved by age, was impatient at being importuned by a stranger (however respectable his position), about an experience as to which, and a man as to whom, his convictions had been generally and notoriously expressed already for eight or nine years past. He very likely did not think himself called upon to attend very diligently upon your questions, but desired to tell you, since he must, what he knew and thought right off, and so make an end of a possibly inconvenient visit. You break in upon his account with doubts or questions. He loses, in consequence, for a moment the thread of what he was saying, is annoyed, and shows it. Thereupon down goes on your notes "irritable," "excitable," "somewhat incoherent"; so that if Weber would not give the smallest color to the suggestion that Zöllner was at "any sense, in an abnormal mental condition" (but distinctly declared the contrary), he might almost appear to be himself in that condition! How often, may I ask, do you suppose that Professor Weber has had to express himself on this subject? How often has he contradicted, perhaps with increasing indignation, the growing myth that Zöllner was insane? How often may he have had occasion to point out that it is not necessary for men of science and exact observers, who were at liberty to

Cyon I know nothing, but believe that his wild and intemperate article in the *Contemporary* was regarded as unfortunate, even by his own party in this country. He is mentioned somewhere in one of Zöllner's polemics, and had, like Wundt, his subjective reasons for regarding Zöllner as "mad." The latter, if living, might with equal or better reason have returned the compliment.

take such precautions, to establish such conditions, and to institute such experiments as Zöllner describes, and as he witnessed, to be familiar with the whole art of conjuring? And with what commission did you come to interrogate him all over again about it all? May he not have thought, also, that a really sincere and unprejudiced inquirer would *first* make a thorough study of Zöllner's statements, weighing well the suppositions as to the witness, etc., necessary to invalidate them, and that your questions indicated no such preparation, no such appreciation of the definite character of the evidence? And yet you can range his answers or information under eight heads, and mention no one point on which he refused or omitted to satisfy you.

Unfortunately we cannot sympathize with your inability to get Weber to submit himself to your method of interrogation, since we know that you did not avail yourself of the opportunity of cross-examining willing witnesses, and of testing the value of vague general statements or expressions throwing some doubt upon Zöllner's perfect sanity. It would be impertinent in me to assume that you do not know how utterly worthless such statements are until they are rigorously traced to their ultimate foundation in definite facts and experience. Sometimes you seem to have got a very little way, as when Wundt's general statement was backed up by another hardly less general, viz., that Zöllner's abnormal mental condition was "clearly indicated in his letters and in his intercourse with his family." Here seemed to be promising material upon which it might have been supposed that any one, of even less distinguished intelligence than yours, who desired to arrive at the truth, would at once have seized. "What were the letters? Have you seen them yourself? If not, who is your informant? Can you refer me to him?" etc. So Fechner should have been asked (seeing that, as will appear, you regard "emotional" derangement as relevant to the general inquiry) what were the sort of things by which Zöllner evinced it "in his family and in his intercourse with friends." And from Scheibner, through you, we ought to have learnt what the occasions and instances particularly were in which Zöllner displayed the tendencies to even the very ordinary mental defects on which it is sought (however preposterously, as it seems to me) to found the suggestion of mental abnormality. But no: just whenever your notes seem to open

the prospect of something that might be dignified by the term evidence, they stop! You are therefore estopped from any complaint of Weber, whose testimony as to Zöllner's perfect sanity at the time of the investigation with Slade is conclusive, notwithstanding that he is "from Göttingen." For Weber, though a visitor at Leipzig at the time, saw far more of the investigation, and Zöllner's conduct of it, than either Fechner or Scheibner. He was present at eight of the séances, Fechner at only two, Scheibner at three or four. He must have been associating intimately with Zöllner during this visit, nor is the distance between Leipzig and Göttingen such that we cannot assume very frequent opportunities of intercourse between the two men both before and after this particular visit.¹ At all events you have laid no foundation for a suggestion to the contrary by any questions (which would presumably have been answered) addressed to Weber as to the extent and period of his acquaintance with Zöllner. In an English law-court, when a counsel neglects to ask a pertinent question, upon a matter peculiarly within a witness's knowledge, it is considered to be because he does not desire the answer, and he is not allowed afterwards to suggest to the jury what, if true, he might have proved by the witness. But quite irrespectively of the degree of his intimacy with Zöllner, Weber's testimony is indirectly, but conclusively, fatal to the suggestion which alone makes the inquiry into Zöllner's state of mind of any importance in relation to the Leipzig investigations with Slade. For nobody has suggested that Weber, at least, was not in full possession of his scientific faculties at that date. If, therefore, we find Weber not disclaiming the character of an independent observer at those eight sittings at which he was present; if, on the contrary, we find him expressly declaring "that he can testify to the *facts* as described by Zöllner, and that he could not himself have described the occurrences better than they are described in Zöllner's book," and "that *he* had the greatest freedom to experiment and set conditions, and that the conditions were favorable to observation," *what becomes of the suggestion that it was some abnormal mental defect of Zöllner's that made him see or describe the facts as recorded? Let Zöllner have been as mad as you please, his madness was not responsible in*

¹ And in fact we know from Zöllner that he was visiting at Weber's house in May, 1878.

any degree for his reports, if Weber would have similarly described the facts. Upon the supposition—violent and absurd as it appears to me—of Zollner's insanity, the case is somewhat analogous to that of a criminal trial in which the principal witness for the prosecution is an accomplice or person of tainted character. Corroboration is required; but if corroboration is forthcoming, circumstantially or otherwise, on any material point of the testimony, the jury is invited to convict, because the presumption against the witness's credibility is *ad hoc* rebutted. A bad man may be telling the truth; a man of unsound mind may be an excellent observer; only in each case we want *some* proof of it. What better proof of the latter fact can there be than that a sane man, who is admittedly a good observer, independently observed the same things in the same way? Weber's corroboration sets up the *whole* of Zöllner's reports, whether Zöllner was of perfectly sound mind or not, because it rebuts the presumption that there is any connection between his mental infirmity (granting that) and his reports. It is unnecessary to insist on Weber's competence at that date. But I cannot refrain from quoting what Fechner said in 1879, in the book already cited¹ upon this point: "Yet his (Zöllner's) account of Spiritualistic facts rests not solely on his authority, but also upon the authority of a man in whom the very spirit, so to say, of exact observation and induction is embodied, W. Weber, whose renown in this respect has never been impugned up to the moment when he avouched the reality of Spiritualistic phenomena. To hold him also from this moment for a bad observer, who has let himself be duped by a conjurer, or for a visionary, seduced by a predilection for mystical things, is truly somewhat strong, or much rather weak, and yet that is implied in the rejection of his testimony. For my own part, I confess that after he, in a whole series of sittings, along with Zöllner, and, for the most part, also Scheibner,² one of the most acute and rigorous

¹ *Die Tagesansicht, etc.*

² This, as we see, is a mistake, as Scheibner was at only three or four of the sittings. But if Scheibner really doubted, *at the time*, it is curious that his colleague, Fechner, residing at the same university, and presumably in very frequent communication with him, should have thus publicly adduced his testimony a year or two later. Did Scheibner *then* disclaim it? We know how frequently it happens that impressions of these things fade from the mind, and *then* doubts arise, which may easily be antedated.

mathematicians, not only looked on at the experiments with Slade, but took in hand and had in hand all appliances and measures adopted at them, one word of his testimony for the reality of the Spiritualistic phenomena weighs more with me than all that has been said or written on the other side by those who have never, themselves, been observers in this field, or have only observed it as one looks on at conjurers, and who hold themselves thereafter entitled to speak of objective conjuring tricks."

But before passing to other considerations upon Zöllner's testimony, less or not at all connected with the question of his partial insanity, and the bearing of that (even if one could, as most assuredly one cannot, concede it), upon the value of his reports, I will add (though addition is unnecessary) to the use already made, in this respect, of Weber's testimony, *that of Fechner himself also*. Writing in 1879, Fechner says: "Zöllner, in the account which he has given in his *Scientific Treatises of the Spiritualistic sittings at Leipzig with the American medium, Slade, has made mention of my testimony as well as that of W. Weber and Schelbner, nor have I disclaimed this testimony, only it falls far short of, and weighs even with myself much less than that of Zöllner himself and of his other co-observers; for I was only present at two of the first series of sittings, which were not among the most decisive, and even then much more as a mere looker-on than as an experimenter; and this would certainly not have sufficed, for myself even, conclusively to repel the suspicion of trickery."*

But he goes on to add: "But taking what I saw myself, *without being able to discover any deception by the closest attention, with the results,*" etc., etc. It therefore appears, *that so far as observation goes*, Fechner's on these occasions corroborate Zöllner's, thus affording additional evidence (were that wanted) that Zöllner's *observations*, at all events, were not vitiated by any mental abnormality. Now it is remarkable, that whereas you make use of Wundt's statement that "Professor Fechner was afflicted with an incipient cataract" (what a convenient word this "incipient" is!) "and could see very little," Fechner himself, though evidently and avowedly desirous to minimize the value of his own observations, neither in 1879 nor in 1886 says anything at all of this "incipient" cataract in 1877. And it is further remarkable, as exemplifying the value of your inquiries in Germany, that you were contented with the second-hand, and off-hand, statement of Wundt upon

this point, and though you saw Fechner himself on the same day (and apparently later on that day), it does not seem to have occurred to you to get his *first-hand* testimony on a point so personal to himself!! Had it been a point on which you laid no stress, and of which you made no argumentative use, there would be little to say upon this, except that it is not suggestive of a very rigorous sense of what evidence is and means, on the part of one who is so ready to reject the evidence of Zöllner and Weber. But you do make a very express and special use of this statement of Wundt's; for you turn it against Weber's testimony to Zöllner's perfect sanity, objecting (p. 113) that he might be mistaken in that because he had entirely neglected to note that Fechner was "partly blind." And you actually say, moreover, that "the fact is admitted that he (Fechner) was, at the time of the investigation, suffering from cataract, which made all observation extremely defective." "Admitted!" by whom? There is not one word about it in your note of Fechner's statements, Scheibner says nothing about it, nobody says anything about it but Wundt (and even he, who is, I suppose, not an oculist as well as an experimental psychologist, does not go so far), and the only person who could "admit" the allegation of Wundt, in his absence, is not asked a single question about it! *If this is a specimen of the judgment, care, and impartiality of the Seybert Commission, it is hardly entitled to credit for even the most elementary of the qualifications for research in the great and difficult subject it has undertaken, or, indeed, in any subject whatever.*

As regards Fechner's disposition as a witness, you say (p. 111): "If any one could be tempted to make Zöllner as sane as possible, it would be one in the position of Professor Fechner." Why? You do not say; but in the absence of any more apparent reason, most of your readers will probably suppose you to refer to some notorious bias of Fechner's in favor of Spiritualism. Well; here is what he said for himself on that point in 1879:—

"If in the foregoing I have interested myself for the reality of Spiritualism, that is, as is not less evident from the foregoing, not from any sympathy with it, but because justice is due to the thing and to persons; for willingly as one would put aside Spiritualism at any price, yet is the price of truth too high. The *Day-view* (Tagesansicht) can exist with or without Spiritualism: preferably, however, without rather than with it; for if in some weighty

points they coincide, and the latter may, and I believe up to certain limits actually does, support the former, yet does its abnormality disturb not only this, but the whole system of our previous knowledge; and only just on this account can I content myself with its reality, because I take account at the same time of this its abnormal character, owing to which it can find a fitting place neither in the healthy life itself, nor in the healthy life of science. Now it is no satisfaction for the champion of the *Day-view* to be obliged to admit one more shady side in the account of the world. That I am not generally well-disposed to mystical phenomena is proved by my pamphlet *On the Last Days of the Doctrine of Od.* However, I am seventy-eight years old, and have written the *Zendavesta* and this book, facts which will be more in requisition by opponents who encounter Spiritualism in the manner described above."¹

So we see that his bias was just the other way. And it so happens that I am able to supply further testimony, as well upon this point, as also perhaps to some extent, indirectly, on the degree of confidence Fechner attached to his own observations at the time. I have before me a letter, which I feel at liberty to use, from a German gentleman, a friend of Fechner's, and *not a Spiritist*, but one who writes: "I have to confess that my sympathies with Spiritualism have not been very warm," and with whom I had some correspondence in 1882. Under date of the 29th October in that year, he wrote me: "I have seen a manuscript extract from Fechner's diary, referring to the séances held at Professor Zöllner's, and it was most interesting to observe how his inclination to consider Mr. Slade's experiments as all humbug or conjuring tricks had gradually given way, not to the enthusiasm roused in Zöllner, but to the conviction at least that there must be 'something in it,' that to deny the reality of Spiritistic phenomena would be to impugn the possibility of establishing any facts by way of experiment," etc. Now it will hardly be disputed that Fechner's impressions, recorded in his diary at the time, have an evidential value for whatever question they bear upon, incomparably higher than that of a conversation with you nine years later on the subject. Did you ask Fechner if he had any notes or record of his own made at the time? If you did not, what are we to think of an inquirer who is indifferent to such a

¹ *Die Tagesansicht, etc.*

possibility of checking or correcting long subsequent impressions by an authentic and contemporary record? That there is, or was, such a record appears certain from the letter of my correspondent, and if we cannot treat his second-hand and general information of its contents as affording a presumption of much value that Fechner rather underrated, even in 1879, the effect upon his mind, in 1877, of *his own* observations, it at least suggests that Fechner's convictions as regards the genuine character of the phenomena were quite as decided as Zöllner represented them to be. I shall have to refer to this point again, when dealing with your misunderstanding of a remark of Scheibner's, on which you attempt to raise a doubt on Zöllner's accuracy on this point, without having asked either of your witnesses, point-blank, whether Zöllner had or had not the authority from them to make the statement he professed to make on their express authority.

I have just one more stone, but that as weighty as any, to fling after this wretched offspring of prejudice and animosity, founded upon nothing but the affliction of collateral members of Zöllner's family, the suggestion that he was "insane" ("incipiently" or otherwise) in any sense of that term which can be evidentially dealt with.¹ That is an appeal to the internal evidence of the reports themselves. Only read them, first with regard to their method, their exactitude, their perfect clearness, and then with regard to the character of many of the facts alleged in them. On the first point, I have already quoted the opinion of E. von Hartmann, one of the most scientifically educated of men whose specialty is less science than philosophy. Look at the tests devised, the precautions taken, the discrimination apparent. Then as to facts, judge what degree of hallucination, of mental aberration, must be supposed in the case of some of them, if they did not occur as described, and under the conditions described. Not to go through the book, take, for a single instance, the fact described (p. 89 to the end of the chapter, in my translation) of the little table vanishing, and then reappearing in descent from the ceiling upon the heads of the two sitters. No form of insanity, short of that which subjects the patient to the most positive and pronounced hallucination of the senses, would at all cover such evidence as this, unless amounting to a

¹ For as already seen, the statement of Fechner and Scheibner cannot at all be thus regarded.

complete moral perversion of the sense of truth, that is, unless Zöllner is held to have *invented* the fact. So that to be of any use to skeptics, the insanity theory must go the length of suggesting that in 1877-78, either Zöllner was little better than a raving lunatic, or his moral nature had become utterly depraved and diseased. Your conclusions, of course, fall very far short of this; but nothing less than this will suffice, if you will fairly encounter *all* Zöllner's testimony. Let us see, however, how far you are helped by an "incipience" of "emotional derangement."

Hitherto, I have not dealt with the alleged or suggested disqualifications of the *normal* Zöllner for an investigation of the kind in question, nor with the attempts of recent criticism to show that, in general, statements apparently the most exact and careful of conditions and observations exclusive of fraud in relation to these phenomena are to be received with distrust. By all means let such criticism do its worst with Zöllner's reports. But we are asked to *reinforce* adverse criticism with presumptions derivable from the alleged abnormal state of the witness. Now upon this point you say: "Bearing in mind, therefore, the mental attitude in which, and the object with which, Zöllner approached this investigation, we cannot look upon any subjective, or emotional, mental disturbance, which results, as described, in making him narrow his attention more and more upon a few ideas, and find it difficult to observe what seems contrary to them, as without objective significance, particularly where we know the man to be a total stranger to investigations of such a nature as this one, and not only quite ignorant of possible methods of deception, but unwilling to doubt the integrity of the medium." Let us examine these positions. By all means we will bear in mind, as you desire, the "mental attitude" with which Zöllner approached the investigation, that it was, in your own word, "Receptive"; and I will only ask what would be rightly thought of any man of science who did *not* approach an investigation with a readiness to recognize affirmative results, should they occur? But if you mean more than this, I must reply by supplementing your quotation from what Zöllner had written himself at an earlier date by adding a passage you omit: "Now whether the Spiritualistic phenomena belong to the first or second category of these conceptions" (objective or subjective), "I do not venture to decide, so far never having witnessed such phenomena." As to his "object," the verification of

the fourth dimension, we know that on his own authority, and do not require "Professor Scheibner's testimony" on the point. The verification of hypotheses is the usual and legitimate purpose of novel scientific experimentation, and it so happens that in this case it was just this hypothesis which led Zöllner to the devising of tests the least familiar to the medium—such as the production of the true knots in an endless string, the removal of the coins from the closed box, etc., etc. So much for the "mental attitude" and the "object." The next passage in your above-quoted remarks refers to head 6 of your notes of the statement of Professor Scheibner, upon which I have already commented. You here take the "subjective, or emotional, disturbance" as proved to have been existent in 1877-78, but I have already pointed out that it is only by an inference, so liberal as to be barely warranted, from the language attributed to Fechner and Scheibner, that we can treat even the faults of mind and temper, denoted by the imposing term "disturbance," as having been observable at that date. But I will concede that. Only I must decidedly object to your (of course accidental) altering of the word "seeing" in your notes ("He became more and more given to fixing his attention on a few ideas, and incapable of seeing what was against them") into the word "observe" when you would use your notes argumentatively with reference to Zöllner's capacity as an "observer." The note of Scheibner's statement about Zöllner is not very lucid as a whole, but upon this point, the meaning is unmistakable; and you cannot be allowed to convert a statement of a theorist's inability to "see" an objection into a statement of an investigator's inability to "observe" a trick,¹ though you are, of course, at liberty to argue from one to the other. The objection *in limine* to your argument is that it is entirely *à priori*, that you would use it as a substitute for criticism of Zöllner's experiments, and not really in aid of criticism. You have to show, and you do not attempt to show, how the assumption of Zöllner's theoretical bias, intellectual one-sidedness, impatience of contradiction,

¹ Under head 5 of your notes of Scheibner's testimony, there is the statement, "but in his investigations apt to see 'by preference' what lay in the path of his theory. He could 'less easily' see what was against his theory." Here, again, "see" is evidently not used in the sense of objective observation.

emotionalism; nay, if you will, decided and even eager desire for the evidence he thought he obtained, helps you in the least to a skeptical conclusion when you come to examine his testimony in detail. The hypothetically admitted qualities give you a considerable latitude of presumption against any of Zöllner's proceedings, or any of his beliefs, in which they may have played a part, but only on condition that the presumption is not rebutted by positive proof—such as criticism can recognize—that in the particular proceeding or belief in question they played no part. To ascertain whether there is this rebuttal, you must look at his testimony itself, and not turn away from it. Now I have put the case against Zöllner quite as high as you have ventured to put it yourself, or as any one whose opinion can pretend to be at all guided or controlled by evidence can possibly put it. But this case does not include unveracity, nor actual hallucination of the senses. It therefore admits that when Zöllner says he took certain precautions, or describes with rigorous particularity and the most marked emphasis certain conditions, those precautions were in fact taken, and those conditions in fact existed. But if they have only one conceivable purpose, and that the avowed one, of obtaining strictly scientific evidence by elimination of all possibility of deception or conjuring, there is no longer room for the suggestion that unscientific qualities of mind presided over the investigation, and criticism must proceed as best it may, the assumption of any abnormality of Zöllner's mind remaining quite idle and useless on its hands. The psychologist may interest himself in the not difficult task of reconciling the hypothetical existence of that abnormality, or of those unscientific growths of the mind, with the reassertion of the scientific habit and training of the life, when the occasion for them recurs; *the man of common-sense and experience may perhaps prefer to laugh at the hypothesis that there was anything abnormal in Zöllner at all, a disposition which would be much enhanced by the study of the evidence for that hypothesis.*

The above remark, that the truth or relevance of assumptions of Zöllner's partial or "incipient" abnormality has to be tested by the very evidence which those assumptions are used to dismiss, is equally applicable to the account given of Zöllner's *normal* characteristics under head 5 of your notes of Scheibner's testimony. "He was childlike and trustful in character, and might easily have been deceived by an impostor." Might he?

I should like to know what you would think of a reasoner who, on the strength of a subjective estimate of an investigator's character that he was shrewd, skeptical, and the last person in the world to let himself be deceived by an impostor, should rely upon an investigation of mediumistic phenomena in which every obvious precaution against deception had been neglected? That is the converse case, and illustrates the worthlessness and irrelevance of these subjective estimates when we have the materials for an independent and objective judgment. "He expected every one to be honest and frank as he was. He started with the assumption that Slade meant to be honest with him. He would have thought it wrong to doubt Slade's honesty." Now, upon these points we know from Zöllner himself upon what principles he proceeded. It is not the fact that "he started with the assumption that Slade meant to be honest with him." He imposed a preliminary test (which he describes), and it was when this was satisfied that he says: "This observation decided my position towards Mr. Slade. I had here to do with a fact which confirmed the observations of Fechner,¹ and was, therefore, worthy of further investigation." Nor did he, upon this account, thenceforward abate any security suggested by his scientific caution, and the "position" which was thus "decided" towards Slade was not that of a confiding dupe, but that of a scientific investigator who has found something "worthy of further investigation." In view of the precautions actually taken, it is killing the slain to insist that Zöllner explicitly recognized the possible existence of trickery by mediums, for though he says he never himself observed any attempt of the sort with Slade—he adds a consideration—(one of a number familiar to *real* students of the subject, who know the necessity of "inwardness" in this research)—to be taken into account "if this has been the case elsewhere."²

But then Zöllner (and Weber) "knew nothing of jugglery." This objection (as well as the extreme form of it, now being urged in this country, that even professional conjurers are not satisfactory witnesses, because they do not know one another's tricks) merely raises the question of the sufficiency of precau-

¹ Of much older date, and with another sensitive. See Chapter II. of *Transcendental Physics* (translation).

² *Tr. Ph.*, p. 121.—**TR.**

tions and conditions, and of observation under them, to prevent or detect conjuring in general. It comes apparently to this, that I cannot protect a particular point by surrounding it with a wall, unless I know all the roads by which the point can be approached. Analogies, however, are notoriously fallacious. I have elsewhere dealt with the question of the possibilities of mal-observation under the circumstances of these experiments. I am content here to say with Weber: "*If another can understand how jugglery can explain the facts, well and good—I cannot.*" I would only insist that the facts must be studied before they are explained. The only attempts I have seen to explain any of Zöllner's facts by trickery either involve a neglect of main elements of the evidence, or suppositions which it is difficult to treat seriously.

It remains to notice your remark: "There are things in Zöllner's own accounts which indicate a certain lack of caution and accuracy on his part, and tend to lessen one's confidence in his statements. As an instance of inaccuracy, I may mention the statement he made in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* as to the opinions of his colleagues. Professor Zöllner says: 'I reserve to later publication, in my own *Treatises*, the description of further experiments obtained by me in twelve séances with Mr. Slade, and, as I am expressly authorized to mention, in the presence of¹ my friends and colleagues, Professor Fechner, Professor Wilhelm Weber, the celebrated electrician from Göttingen, and Herr Scheibner, professor of mathematics in the University of Leipzig, who are *perfectly* convinced of the reality of the observed facts, altogether excluding imposture or prestidigitation.' Here the attitude of the four men is not correctly described, and Professor Zöllner's statement does them injustice, as Professor Scheibner remarked. At least two of the men were merely *inclined* to accept the facts, and to those two the words '*perfectly* convinced' will not apply."

Now to begin with an inaccuracy of your own in the above, which I should be far from saying should "tend to lessen our confidence" in any deliberate statements you might make of facts of personal observation. You say that Zöllner does not

¹ This general statement is, of course, to be read in connection with the accounts, which show what witnesses were present at each particular sitting.

correctly describe the attitude of the four men (in saying that they were *perfectly* convinced of the reality of the observed facts), "and Professor Zöllner's statement does them injustice, *as Professor Scheibner remarked.*" Now the following, according to your notes, is Scheibner's remark:—

"Professor Zöllner's book, said Professor Scheibner, would create the impression that Weber and Fechner and he agreed with Zöllner throughout in his opinion of the phenomena 'and their interpretation,' but this, he said, is not the case." The significant words here are those which you have put in inverted commas. So that what Scheibner complains of is not that Zöllner attributed to him a perfect conviction of the reality of the observed facts, but that his book "would create the impression" of agreement in the interpretation of the phenomena. The "interpretation," however, was the Fourth Dimensional one which Scheibner had just said was the theory Zöllner was intent on proving, that being evidently not the only one by which the facts might be explained, allowing them to be genuine phenomena. The use of the words, "create the impression," makes it additionally evident that it was to this Scheibner was referring, those words being the natural ones for that meaning, but were not natural or adequate if he had meant to refer to the distinct and formal statement of his conviction of the "reality" of the facts and of the authority given by him to Zöllner for this representation. As regards the facts themselves he explains that "to him, *subjectively*, jugglery did not seem a good 'or sufficient' explanation of the phenomena," and he also says, "he is short-sighted, 'and might easily have left unnoticed something essential.'" But the question is, not what Scheibner says or believes *now*, but what he believed and what he said to Zöllner, and authorized Zöllner to say, in 1877. Nowhere in your notes is he made to say: I never gave Zöllner authority to state that I was perfectly convinced of the reality of the facts — (that is to say, that they were not conjuring). *Has Scheibner ever publicly repudiated Zöllner's statement that he had such authority from Scheibner?* Surely that is a question which it would have been proper for you to ask him, if you had received the impression that he was repudiating the statement to you! And since Scheibner minimized to you his own opportunities for observation, you had a splendid opportunity, had you chosen to avail yourself of it, of testing either his memory, or Zöllner's accuracy

of statement (so far as any counter-statement of Scheibner's, nine years later, could affect our judgment of the latter). You might have asked him whether the following statement by Zöllner was or was not an accurate representation of what occurred, or if he had ever in any way contradicted or corrected it: "Here-upon Slade gave the accordion to Professor Scheibner, and requested him to hold it in the manner described" (that is, grasping the *keyless* end, so that the side with keys hung down free) "as it might possibly happen that the accordion would play in his hand also, without Slade touching it at all. Scarcely had Scheibner the accordion in his hand, than it began to play a tune exactly in the same way, while the bell under the table again rang violently. Slade's hands meanwhile rested quietly on the table, and his feet, turned sideways, could be continually observed during this proceeding."¹

Now to this statement, if true, assuredly that of Scheibner to you will not apply, when he says: "He was merely a passive spectator, and could not, properly speaking, make observations — could not suggest conditions 'or gain the control which seemed necessary.'"

I will not do you the injustice to suppose that your notions of how evidence is to be dealt with are so crude that you think that such a particular statement of Zöllner's at the time is to be disposed of by a general statement of the sort quoted, by Scheibner, nine years after the occurrence, without any attempt to bring Scheibner's mind into present contact with the specifically alleged feats. I can only suggest that you had really taken no trouble whatever to study the evidence before seeing the witnesses. Nothing is easier to understand than that Scheibner's attitude now may be very different from what it was in 1877, and that his recollection may be exceedingly defective of particulars. But no man with the least sense of scientific, or even common responsibility, would allow himself to be publicly represented by a distinguished colleague as the principal figure and actor in such an incident as the above, without protest or a single qualifying word, if the statement did not accord with his own knowledge or recollection at the time of publication. Your omission to put a single question to him on the two important points: 1st, of his present recollection of this incident (for

¹ *Tr. Ph.*, p. 40. — TR.

one); 2d, of his tacit allowance of Zöllner's statements, both as to such particulars as the above, and as to the alleged authority given by Scheibner to cite his satisfaction with the evidence, in my view is alone sufficient to deprive your interview with Scheibner of any possible evidential value. And I should be much surprised if any lawyer, at least, could be found to disagree with me.

I personally know of a case, stronger than Scheibner's, of the effacement by time (and long cessation of active interest in the investigation) of an impression of the same sort as regards all its value and significance for the mind. A gentleman of a scientific profession, now holding an important public post, recorded an experience in detail, which he rightly himself said excluded every possibility of fraud, and his record was published many years ago. Making his acquaintance comparatively recently, and finding him exceedingly skeptical, I reminded him of this remarkable experience of his own, and found him very disinclined to admit that there was anything in it, but quite unable to explain his statement if there was not. With the weakening of the impression in memory, all his original subjective presumption against such facts, before he had witnessed anything of the sort, reasserted itself; the phenomenon was isolated in his experience, and could not relate itself to any context in his mind. Neither in his case nor in Scheibner's should any value be attributed to mental disparagement of an old experience, recorded at the time, unless the witness is able to correct his testimony in detail, or to show how it had less than its apparent objective significance.

When I find you next saying, "As one of the numerous instances of lack of caution" on Zöllner's part, I pause in the middle of the sentence to make the remark that the foregoing review does not encourage the reader to accept, without considerable caution on his own part, your general statement of numerous instances of lack of caution on Zöllner's. But I willingly consider the particular to which you condescend — "I may refer to Zöllner's statement that at certain times writing was heard upon the slate, giving no proof whatever to show that the writing was really done at the time of hearing the sounds, and apparently quite ignorant of the fact that deception may readily be practised on this point." Now this is a good illustration of *the fallacy of abstract criticism*, of criticism not brought into

contact with the definite cases to which it is applied. For when you say that Zöllner states that writing was heard on the slate, "giving no proof whatever to show that the writing was done at the time of hearing the sounds," *I can only express my amazement at such a misrepresentation.* What proof of this fact could Zöllner possibly have offered (short of seeing the writing in course of execution) other or better than the circumstances which he so often and so minutely describes? Why, do you suppose, does Zöllner take the trouble on such occasions to account for Slade's hands and feet, and to say that they were under observation even when the slate was at a distance from Slade? And why is he not to speak of the sound of writing, when the whole of the circumstances and conditions of the experiments are the proof that the sound could have been nothing else? Certainly the sound of writing may be simulated, and there are cases in which to say "the sound of writing" (instead of the sound *as of* writing), would beg the question, though even in such a case there is no harm done to the evidence, because the only fact *evidentially* alleged is the *sound*, and its resemblance to that of writing, the explanation of the sound being *obviously* only a mental act of the witness. And if, in such a case, the question-begging expression might, taken by itself, afford some presumption of a want of mental discrimination, or of ignorance of alternative possibilities on the part of the witness, we have still to see whether that presumption is borne out by the general character of his evidence, by any want of particularity and discrimination in his *observations*, apart from their explanation in his mind. But what are we to say of a critic who abstracts from all the conditions and circumstances of an experiment, and treats as applicable under *any* conditions, and in *any* circumstances, a general proposition which only may or may not be relevant, according to the surrounding facts? It is true that the sound of writing may be simulated; so it is true that the note of a bird may be simulated by the vendor of toys in the streets of a crowded city, and it will require a very experienced and attentive ear to tell the difference merely by the ear; but I may nevertheless be permitted to speak of hearing the note of a bird in the apparent solitude of a wood, as evidence that a bird was then and there singing. This, of course, is only put as an extreme case to expose the general fallacy. But it is evident that for any application to the evidence for *psychography*, to

the proposition, "the sound of writing can be simulated," must be added the proposition, "*and localized.*" Now I quite admit that if I hear a sound which I am expecting to hear in a particular place, I shall be very apt to do the localization for myself, *within certain limits.* But these limits are the whole question, whenever Slade's hand was not in contact with the slate at the time the sound was heard, or in immediate proximity to it. And in the cases in which the localization of the sound presents little difficulty, we have to see whether the other observed conditions were such as to put the simulation hypothesis out of the question. Now it is remarkable that on occasions in which simulation of the sound of writing is not excluded, either by the localizing difficulty, or by the described conditions—the observed position of Slade's hands, and sometimes also of his feet, at the time of the sound—Zöllner does *not* use the word "writing," but the word "scratching" (*Kritzeln*). Thus in the first specific instance mentioned by Zöllner of psychography with Slade, we find this term used to describe the sound when the slate was held by Slade over the head of Professor Braune.¹ And further on, in a case where the slate was held half under the table by Slade, we have the same expression.² Nor is it possible to suggest that Zöllner accepted the sound as of itself sufficient evidence of writing, when we find him, in the very same sentence in which he speaks of "very loud writing," adding "between the *untouched* slates," and expressly showing how the supposition of "previous preparation" was excluded—that of simulation of the sound of writing necessarily involving also the supposition of such previous preparation. Seeing that Zöllner was proving psychography up to the hilt by particulars only necessary at all on the presupposition that the sound as of writing was *not* sufficient evidence of writing then and there, to adduce his use of the term "writing" in cases where the sound could not possibly have meant anything else, as an instance of lack of caution, I respectfully submit is not criticism, but talking without critical regard to facts.

I had not intended in this letter to have travelled beyond the question of Zöllner's sanity, and its bearing on his evidence.

¹ *Wiss. Abh.*, Bd. II., 331.—Tr. p. 33.

² S. 339.—Tr. p. 45 (where I rather carelessly translated *Kritzeln* "scribbling").

But I found that when two or three big words, such as "derangement," "disturbance," etc., had been reduced to their substantial content, there was really no case of this sort to answer, and we had nothing under this head to consider practically, but certain alleged emotional and intellectual qualities or defects of the normal Zöllner. I know scarcely any one who cannot be said to be in some sense of unsound mind, if anything we hear of Zöllner entitles you to say that of him in any sense. That the thing should be said of him, and should even be believed in some vague, feeble, and uncertain way by some of his own friends, without any foundation in fact, seems to me not only natural, but almost inevitable in the circumstances. A man of strong feelings, who deeply exasperated more than one prevailing prejudice, who was vehement in controversy, who made enemies, and was not always patient with candid friends, and *in whose family there was known to be insanity*, what more do you want? But there is his evidence. Look at it, study it from beginning to end, and say how much insanity you want to explain it away. We will not trouble you with the other witnesses. You shall antedate Fechner's cataract, and shall call its existence in 1877, without a scrap of evidence, an "admitted" fact. You shall avail yourself of Scheibner's eight years' late disclaimer,¹ upon notes which he refuses to sign, of the "objective" value of his own observations, without testing the value of the disclaimer by the inconvenient questions I have suggested in the course of this letter. You shall get rid of Weber in the best way you can, and I leave you with Zöllner's evidence alone. You need have said nothing about Zöllner. The Commission, of which you are the secretary, in the Preliminary Report expressly declines the examination of existing testimony, on the ground that to sift the evidence of merely half-a-dozen of the "so-called 'facts'" "would require incalculable labour." And yet this same Commission in the same report thinks it impartially consistent with an attitude which is professedly one of reserve, if it is not one of patent prejudice, to call "especial attention" to your report which I have just been considering. Would the Commission have called especial attention to your report if it had evidently

¹ We do not know the date of his answers to German inquirers, mentioned in your notes of his testimony. Zöllner's publication of the experiments in question was in 1878.

been of a character to confirm, rather than (in your and their view) to impair, the authority of Zöllner's evidence? Or would they not rather have said— We have not undertaken to deal with that evidence; we have no occasion, as a Commission for original research, to say anything about it? It would have been reasonable and fair enough to say so, if your inquiries in Germany were not undertaken at the instance of the Commission. But what is not fair and not reasonable, nor in any way profitable to truth, is to offer such a substitute as this report of yours for the "incalculable labour" of criticism. — I beg to remain, yours faithfully,

C. C. MASSEY.

1 Albert Mansions,
Victoria Street, London, S.W.
August, 1887.

In our courts of justice, after the testimony has all been introduced, the judge charges the jury in substance as follows: "Gentlemen of the Jury: The facts in this case are entirely for you; you are the sole judges of the evidence, and of the credibility of the witnesses; and where there is apparently conflicting testimony, it is your duty, if you can, to reconcile it;—but if you cannot do so, then you must determine as nearly as you can which of the witnesses are most likely to testify truthfully; which ones, if any, are influenced by prejudice or interest; which of the witnesses were in a position to be the most likely to see the occurrence narrated by them, and to remember it. For instance, a witness whose attention was directed to the event at the time it happened, who saw it, and took particular notice of it at the time, and who since it occurred has had it called to his attention in such a way as to keep his memory fresh—his testimony is much more reliable than that of one who was only a casual and indifferent observer at the time, and whose attention has not been called to it since the event transpired. It must be evident to you, gentlemen, that two equally truthful and intelligent persons may have seen an occurrence that

happened a number of years before they were called upon to testify to it, and that the particulars of the event might be distinctly remembered by one of them while they have passed from the recollection of the other. This might arise from imperfection of the memory of the one or that his mind had been so absorbed in other, and to him more important matters, that the recollection of the event had become almost obliterated; while the other witness, from having the transaction frequently brought before his mind, would have a distinct recollection of all that occurred.

“The credibility of the witnesses is also a matter for your consideration. The manner in which they tell their story; its probability or improbability; the *prejudice* or *bias* in their minds; their interest in proving or disproving the facts alleged; their sympathy with either of the parties in the cause; or their means of knowing the actual facts in the case,—all these, gentlemen, are to be taken into consideration by you in determining whom you will believe or discredit.

“The court can give you no rule by which you can with certainty adjudge between two conflicting witnesses; their manner while on the witness stand; their evasion of the facts; the color they give to their narration, either by emphasis or otherwise; their candor, or evident disingenuousness, must all be considered by you in weighing their testimony, and you must give to each the credence you think he deserves. But, gentlemen, there is one kind of testimony that it is the duty of the court to warn you against. That is what is called ‘*hearsay evidence*’; where a witness testifies as to what some one *told* him about the occurrence. This evidence should never be admitted in a court; it does sometimes inadvertently *creep* into the case, but it should always be disregarded by the jury. The rule of law is that ‘the very best evidence of which the case in its nature is susceptible should be produced; but *hearsay* testimony never.’

“An oft-repeated story always increases in size, as a rolling snowball accumulates until it becomes an avalanche. The old and familiar tale of our schoolboy days well illustrates this. As a story passes from lip to lip, every successive narrator adds another crow to the original number, or deepens the color of their plumage. You should not permit improper testimony to influence you, neither should you disregard evidence properly admitted under the rule of law.
Per curiam.”

Reader! I believe in the above hypothetical charge of a court; I have correctly, although briefly, stated the law of evidence so far as it applies to this case. Compare then the “hearsay testimony” of the witness George S. Fullerton, who testifies as to what was told him in Germany, of an event that happened nearly nine years before, by men who had given the subject no particular attention for that length of time — even if he related what he heard as he *heard* it — with the positive evidence of C. C. Massey, who was a friend of Professor Zöllner, who translated his book, and published it in England, thus reviving and keeping alive all the incidents therein related; compare the two witnesses and their respective narrations, and which will you believe? Remember you are the jury in this issue, — the sole judges of the weight of the testimony, and the credibility of the two witnesses; and can you for a moment hesitate as to whom you will give credence?

I appeal to the candid juror who has carefully read the letter of C. C. Massey, and heard the other evidence in this case, to determine whether George S. Fullerton’s statement does not show in every sentence that his prejudices were above his conscience; that his zeal in search of fraud far exceeded his desire to ascertain the truth.

Every lawyer of experience has discovered the fact that there are two varieties of witnesses that appear upon the

stand in our courts of justice. One will relate an incident he *did not* see so adroitly that it will look exactly as if he *had* seen it; another will relate an incident he *did* see so bunglingly that it will look exactly as if he *had not* seen it; and after a careful reading of the testimony of this witness, I confess my inability to determine to which of the two classes he belongs. All through in his report there is an apparent show of truth and sincerity, yet the reader who will carefully peruse its pages will clearly discover that while

“The voice is Jacob’s voice, the hands are the hands of Esau.”

But his testimony at the best is “hearsay,” and its correctness depends upon his recollection of what the “collaborateurs” of Professor Zöllner told him. Why did he not procure the written statements of Professors *Fechner*, *Scheibner*, and *Weber*? Why depend upon his recollection alone of their relation of the events? I think that I may safely apply almost his own words in relation to Dr. Slade — to himself.

“The experience of the public with this member of the Seybert Commission, as obtained through the Massey letter and his report, “*would suggest that the lack of procuring these statements on his part was unfortunate.*”

Now let us refer again to the testimony of Mr. Massey, well known in England and Germany as a gentleman of worth and high literary and scientific attainments.

Compare his testimony with that of Mr. Fullerton. Remember that he is a German scholar, who would experience no difficulty in understanding what was said to him by Professor Zöllner’s associates — as Mr. Fullerton did. He was an intimate friend of Zöllner; translated his works, and would most positively know his mental condition at the time the investigation with Dr. Slade was made, and for a number of years after; and he contradicts, in the most positive manner, the testimony of Ful-

lerton. Contrast the evidence of a witness who knows personally of what he testifies, with that of one who relates only what he says was told him, and then let your verdict be what the common experience and common sense of mankind shall dictate.

There is another significant fact connected with the testimony of Mr. Fullerton, to which I would call the attention of the jury; *i.e.*:—

At the time this witness visited London, Professor William Crookes was the editor of *The Quarterly Journal of Chemistry*. He had made a thorough investigation of spiritual phenomena, and published the result of his investigation. I have so frequently referred to him in this review, that I only recapitulate when I say that he is one of the most eminent scientists and trained investigators now living. This fact Mr. Fullerton well knew. He also knew that Professor Crookes had become thoroughly convinced of the truth of many of the claims of Spiritualism. He was as accessible to the “*cheek*” of the member of the Seybert Commission as were the German professors whom he interviewed, and whose infirmities he published to the world in his report. He must have known what this eminent scientist would have testified to, for his experiments were published in his *Researches of the Phenomena of Spiritualism*;—and yet Mr. Fullerton did not interview *him*. Gentlemen of the Jury, why did he not? Again I repeat his own words against him: the circumstances “*would suggest that the lack of procuring Professor Crooke’s statements on his part was unfortunate.*” That is, it was unfortunate if he was honestly searching after truth, and was desirous of attaining the object of his search. But if he was striving to imitate the “*great Circumlocution Office*” in its efforts to find the best method of “*How not to do it,*” then was he the most successful, and the ablest member of the “*immortal ten.*”

Gentlemen of the Jury: The time is long past when evident evasions of the truth by a witness will be approved or even tolerated in a court of justice. The days of Jeffreys as a judge, or Hopkins and Oates as witnesses, are among the memories of past infamies, and their records are a blot on the history of our race. To-day Justice is imperative in her demands for "*the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*"; and a wilful attempt to evade it by a witness deserves the condemnation of every honest man in the jury-box.

It was once said by an able jurist, that "there is often as much force in what is not proven, when it should and could have been, as there is in what is proven. Justice neither approves of concealment nor sanctions evasion: both are criminal in a witness, and taint his testimony with a well-founded suspicion of falsehood." Under this plain and just exposition of the law I leave the witness with you, to deal with him as kindly as your sense of justice shall dictate, and your regard for the truth shall approve. Only remember the old familiar and time-honored maxim,—

"FIAT JUSTITIA RUAT CÆLUM."

CHAPTER VIII.

“That blessed mood
 In which the burden of the mystery
 Of all this unintelligible world
 Is lightened.”

WORDSWORTH'S *Tintern Abbey*.

IN the summer of the year of 1854, in company with the late Bishop Calvin Kingsley, Professor L. D. Williams and the Rev. N. Norton, all of whom are now dead, I visited Washington City to attend a meeting of the “American Association for the Advancement of Science.” At that meeting the three named gentlemen and myself became members of the Association. This was during the administration of Franklin Pierce, and while Jeff Davis was Secretary of War. The meetings of the Association were held in the buildings of the “Smithsonian Institute,” in a spacious hall, whose walls were lined with show-cases filled with philosophical and chemical apparatus, presented to the Institute by the then learned and celebrated Dr. Robert Hare, who died in 1858.

One morning, after the Association had convened and a committee had been appointed to report on some scientific question that had just been discussed, and had retired for that purpose, the president of the Association proceeded to read some announcements that had been laid upon his desk. He read several, and at last one as nearly as I can remember in the following words:—

“There will be a lecture on Spiritualism at—— Hall this evening. The members of the ‘American Association for the Advancement of Science’ are respectfully invited to attend.

[Signed]

“A. B.”

When the president read this announcement, he colored, looked provoked, threw it down on the desk, and said, "Gentlemen, if I had observed what this was before I read it, I would not have insulted this Association by reading it."

There were present over a hundred of the most learned men of the country, as well as scientific visitors from abroad. There was a very *audible* smile on the faces of the audience, — as much at the very apparent mortification of the presiding officer, as at the astounding impudence of the invitation.

What! one of the most learned and scientific societies in the world invited to attend a lecture on Spiritualism? Had it been to see the feats of a harlequin, a negro minstrel entertainment, or even a Punch and Judy show, the matter might have been tolerated; — but a lecture on Ghosts! It was too much for the dignity of the great men and minds there assembled, and immediately a hearty burst of laughter shook the walls of the academic hall to their deep foundation. Not a gentleman in the room had ever heard so laughable a joke before, and it was some minutes before the merriment subsided. At length Dr. Robert Hare arose, and in a dignified manner requested permission to say a few words, as a committee had just retired and there was nothing before the house. Of course his request was granted. The dignified and noble-looking old man paused a moment as he looked over the assembly, — many of whom had received their scientific education from his books, then he said: —

"Mr. President, as a body of learned and scientific men met together to consider all natural phenomena, would it not be more becoming for us to investigate a subject before we condemn and deride it?"

There was a silence for a few moments, when he continued: "As a committee is now out and there is nothing

before the Association, will you allow me to make a few remarks on so-called spiritual phenomena?"

I could see that the president nodded an unwilling assent. I did not understand the cause of the hesitation and evident reluctance on the part of our presiding officer. The proposition of the gray-haired philosopher seemed to my unsophisticated mind very proper; it certainly was exactly in the line of our duty "*to investigate before we derided and condemned,*" — but I was a young member of the institution, and I soon found that I was in error. "*Condemn and ridicule first,*" and never investigate, seemed to be the *modus operandi* of this great and learned body, in all theories not strictly scientifically orthodox.

However, the permission having been reluctantly granted, Dr. Hare proceeded, and in a most impressive manner related his experience in "eating of the forbidden fruit," as nearly as I can recollect it, as follows:—

"One year and a half ago I commenced to investigate the subject of Spiritualism. At that time I was so prejudiced against it that I feared I could not be impartial, and I was only induced to give it any attention by the earnest solicitation of an intelligent personal friend, who accompanied me to the home of the medium, and introduced me to her parents. The medium was a little girl ten years of age, a pretty, innocent little child, without art or guile. At the request of my friend the parents of the child consented that my investigation should be conducted as I desired, and in a room with no one present but the medium and myself. The child was considerably frightened at first, but by means of a paper of candy and a kiss I soon won her confidence, and she willingly accompanied me to the parlor. I desired a physical test, and as I had provided no apparatus for the occasion I asked the child's mother for a spring balance, such as are in common use for weighing groceries, etc. She brought me

one that would weigh ten pounds. I tied the ring of the balance to a gas fixture which hung in the centre of the room over a centre table; to the hook of the balance I attached a string, and using a book for a fulcrum and my cane for a lever, I tied the string to the long end of the lever or cane, the fulcrum being about six inches from the short end of the lever; the cane resting on the book, which I set on its end, and the long end of the lever suspended by the string from the balance; the cane being nearly parallel with the top of the table. I then placed the fingers of the child on the top of the short end of my lever. Now it is evident to all that with her hand thus placed she could not exercise a downward force on the long end of the lever. I then *mentally* requested that the long end of the lever should be drawn down so as to pull the spring balance to the end of its motion. This was instantly done; repeatedly at my request the balance was drawn down to the lowest point indicated by its index. Gentlemen, I was more surprised at this phenomenon than was our worthy chairman at the announcement he has just read. I knew it was physically impossible for the child to have done this, and that there was present an *unseen* force that had obeyed my request, and performed an apparently impossible feat. My curiosity was thoroughly aroused, and desiring to test the intelligence of this unseen power, I hastily constructed a simple device. No one saw it but myself. I took a circular disk of thick book-board, about one foot in diameter, and making a hole in the centre thereof, I passed through it a spindle of wood, and fixed a hand or pointer on the end close to the surface of the book-board; around the periphery of the disk I pasted the letters of the alphabet in what printers call 'pi,' with the words 'yes' and 'no,' and the ten digits; on the other side of the disk I affixed a common spool to the spindle of wood; around this spool

I wound a string, and attached a small weight to one end of it. With this device wrapped in a newspaper, and seen only by myself, the next day I again visited my little friend. Another paper of candy and a kiss confirmed our fast growing friendship, and the little child felt confidence in me. We again went to the parlor. I placed a bandage over the eyes of the wondering child. I was almost ashamed of my carefulness. Had the little girl been an experienced magician, I could not have taken more care to prevent any possible deception than I did. I arranged my cane as before, only passing the long end of the string which was wound around the spool over a branch of the gas fixture, and tying it to the long end of my lever; the weight on the other end of the string balancing it, so that a movement of the long end of my cane up and down would revolve the spool and move my index or pointer around the disk of cardboard, as the long hand of a clock moves around the face. Then placing the child's hand on the short end of my lever, as before, I stood in front of the device, and mentally asked this question: 'Are there any spirits present who wish to communicate with me?' Immediately the index hand commenced to move, and slowly revolving until it came over the word 'yes,' it stopped. I next enquired the name, and the index moved from one letter to another, back and forward, until it spelled out the name of a boy who had been a playmate of mine, and who had died over fifty years ago." Here a smile of incredulity illumined the features of most of the great men present, which Dr. Hare observing, he remarked:—

"You may smile, gentlemen, if you will, — but I know that I talked with the spirit of the friend of my boyhood, for he related to me, by the use of the devise I have described, a number of incidents that happened in our youth, while we were fishing along the banks of the river,

(he mentioned the name, but I have forgotten it) ; events that had long ago escaped my memory, or at least my thoughts, for I had entirely forgotten them until they were brought to my recollection in the manner I have described.

“I have continued my investigation, gentlemen, and am as well satisfied as I am of the existence of any other natural phenomenon that so-called spiritual manifestations are a reality, — even more than is claimed for them by Spiritualists, and that we are in the morning of an era in scientific investigation that will astonish us all : and I do desire this learned body to investigate carefully and scientifically the phenomena of so-called Spiritualism.”

Just then the absent committees returned, and Dr. Hare ceased his remarks.

I was more than astonished at what I had heard. I knew that Dr. Hare was at that time considered one of the most learned men on this continent ; that he was the author of a number of scientific works that were considered standard authority on the subjects of which they treated. In the room where we were assembled were a great number of pieces of scientific apparatus which he had invented to illustrate the operations of many of nature's hidden laws ; and his statements almost persuaded me, against my will, to *believe*. I might have become a convert then and there but for what followed.

That evening our association was given a reception at the residence of Jeff Davis, and it was attended by nearly all of our number. The magnificent and spacious saloons were filled with votaries of both science and fashion. While there I heard numerous conversations among the savants on the subject of Dr. Hare's remarks. They looked wise, shook their sage heads, and I heard them frequently remark, “The old doctor is becoming crazy on *that* subject.” Poor old man, how I pitied him ! and yet,

the next day, when I heard him most eloquently and learnedly discuss one of the abstruse scientific questions before the association, and observed with what profound attention he was listened to, and saw how clearly he demonstrated his views on the matter under discussion, I thought I had never before seen such brilliant and intellectual symptoms of mental aberration, (this was before the publication of the report of the Seybert Commission); and that, after all, the dreaded disease of insanity was not so terrible a calamity as I had supposed. I was reminded of an incident in the life of Robert Fulton, the projector of the steamboat: While the celebrated inventor was building his first boat on the banks of the Hudson River, he had occasion to go to a near-by blacksmith's shop to have some iron work done on his steam engine. While there he remarked to a number of idlers in the shop, "Gentlemen, I shall not live to see it—but the child is now born that will—when steamboats will be preferred to all other modes of navigation, and will be particularly useful on our inland lakes and rivers." He then picked up his piece of machinery, which was finished by that time, and left the shop with his head bowed down in inventive thought. As he walked away, the blacksmith looked after him with an expression of heart-felt pity on his honest countenance, and remarked to the bystanders in tones of sympathy, "Poor old man! what a pity it is he is crazy."

Dr. Hare was one of the ablest scientists of his day; he was quoted as authority as a physicist on two continents; no man living had discovered more of nature's hidden laws than he, or had invented more apparatus for demonstrating the cause of natural phenomena. He was a giant in intellect, a savant in learning, a truthful Christian gentleman; and yet those whose intellectual vision and learning were confined to the narrow limits of com-

mon text-books pronounced him insane because he had entered fields of thought unknown to them, and had investigated phenomena their bigotry would not permit them to examine. If he was mad, then, as Dryden says in the *Spanish Friar*, —

“ There is a pleasure sure
In being mad which none but madmen know.”

And what a debt of gratitude does the world owe to those *madmen* who have intellect enough to lead them out of the beaten ruts of science, worn deep by the footsteps of the common herd, and whose courage places them on the very van of the army of advancement. What a pity it is that the mental weakness so much deplored by the

“ Rigid, righteous, and unco wise ”

is not contagious, and that such insanity as that of Fulton and Dr. Hare could not become an epidemic in the country.

What ample room is there on this little world of ours for the exercise of a broader Christian charity. How limited are our comprehensive powers, when compared with Him who formed the universe, and governs it by the might of His unknown laws. Faint, indeed, are our conceptions of even the most obvious laws of nature, as manifested on this earth, and how little do we know of the unexplored regions where the foot of science has never trod. How limitless must be the unseen boundaries of the spirit world; and if the laws that govern our little atom of solid earth are so incomprehensible to us, how vastly more so must be those that environ the whole universe within their folds. How little do we know of the mysteries of life even in our own bodies, and how much less of the conditions that surround spirit forms or organizations, if such exist.

A year after the event narrated, Mrs. Cora L. V. Hatch came to our city. The public was notified that the young lady was a "trance speaker"; arrangements were made for her to lecture at Library Hall, and it was proposed that a learned professor of our college and myself should be appointed a committee to give her a test subject, *i.e.* one that in her normal condition she most probably would be ignorant of. It was arranged that the young lady was to be invited to visit my museum, a large private collection which I had made while engaged in scientific studies and investigations, as a pastime, and as a relief from the labors of an arduous profession; should she call as it was intended, I was to engage her in conversation on various scientific subjects, and then we were to give her a question involving a knowledge of that science which she appeared to be the most ignorant of. The afternoon preceding the evening of the lecture she called, in company with a young gentleman and lady of my acquaintance, who were not *particeps criminis* in the conspiracy against her, and who knew nothing of the object of her visit.

When she called, I saw a very pretty young girl, apparently eighteen years of age. She was sprightly and intelligent; yet it soon became evident from her conversation that she was not learned in the sciences. She viewed my electrical and chemical apparatus with undisguised wonder; the collection of shells, insects, and birds excited her admiration, which she evinced in an almost childlike manner. When I saw her and conversed with her a short time, my heart relented at the severe ordeal we were preparing for her; and if I had been fifteen years younger, I would have thrown up my commission, and resigned my position as committeeman. But Science is no respecter of persons, and in her investigations no caste is recognized, no condition in life can claim immunity from the effect of her demonstrations.

I accompanied the young ladies around the room until we came to a case of geological specimens. This she would have passed by with a casual glance. They evidently did not interest her; therefore, there I paused. "Ah, yes!" I thought; "this is *terra incognita* to you. Young lady, you shall lecture this evening on Geology. I showed her specimens of *metamorphic rocks*, of *fossiliferous formations*, of *infusoria in bog iron-ore*, talked to her of *pliocene strata* and *plutonic rocks*, until she looked thoroughly bewildered and bored; but I kept on with my torture until, in the midst of one of my most learned essays, her wandering eyes caught sight of a beautiful little stuffed bird in a near-by case, when, with an exclamation of delight, she interrupted my scientific dissertation with the exclamation, in a delighted, childlike voice: "Oh, Lizzie! do just look at that dear little bird! Don't you wish you had it for your hat?" "That will do," I thought; "you do not appear to understand what I have been talking about; you shall deliver to us a lecture this evening on one of the most abstruse theories of Geology, and may the spirits have mercy on you if your inspiration fails you, for you certainly know nothing of the subject yourself."

Evening came; the hall was filled with an intelligent, anxious, yet incredulous assembly. The young girl was seated on the rostrum, looking over the audience with a modest, innocent, and almost childlike expression of countenance, apparently wholly unconscious of the awful fate that awaited her. My friend the professor arose and read the question she was to discuss. It was so ponderous that I fancied it shook the building as he read it. The young girl looked bewildered for a moment, then modestly suggested that "she feared the subject would not be interesting to a popular audience." We informed her that it was given as a test of her inspiration. She closed

her eyes resignedly, shivered a moment, and then appeared to become unconscious. A friend of the committee, who was a learned professor as well as a wit, whispered in our ear, "See, your question has paralyzed her; no wonder! if the Philistines had met Sampson with that question, they would have killed *him*, and with a weapon very like the one he used so effectually against them." A few moments more, and the young girl arose and stepped slowly forward to the front of the rostrum.

A singular change had come over her face. She looked ten years older, her girlish expression was completely gone; her features seemed at first rigid and deathlike, then they relaxed, and in a clear, melodious voice she commenced her lecture, — and here my pen fails me. I cannot describe the beauty of her diction, or the deep and profound learning she manifested on a subject that in her normal condition she could have known but little about. For over an hour she held her audience spellbound; a more profoundly learned and eloquent discourse I never heard before. It was very soon apparent to me that she could teach the committee many things in the science of geology unknown to them. She quoted from authors old and new who had written on the subject. Geological terms flowed from her lips like music from the strings of a harp. When she closed her lecture and took her seat, she appeared very much exhausted; her girlish expression of countenance returned; for a moment the audience remained silent, then an applause followed that shook the building to its foundation. Her lecture was an overwhelming success. The people looked at her innocent, young face with astonishment. A savant in learning, dressed in silk and lace, with the face of a schoolgirl and the eloquence of a Cicero, had spoken as I had never heard man speak before.

The next day I met the professor. "Well," said I, "*what* did you think of that lecture?"

"I'll tell you, Richmond," said he, "it was the most wonderful instance of mind reading I ever heard of."

"Mind reading!" I replied; "what do you mean by that?"

"Why," said he, "you know that if you place a magnetic needle on a stand away from any immediate influence, it will point north?"

"Yes," I remarked; "I have observed that for some years; but what then?"

"Why," continued the professor, "if you take a couple of magnetic bars of steel, and place them at unequal distances on the right and left of the needle, it will oscillate for a few moments, and finally settle at the resultant point between the three forces operating on it; *i.e.*, the magnetism of the earth, the magnetic influence of the one bar on the right, and the one on the left. Well, it was so with the girl. Her lecture was but a reflex of your mind and mine operating on hers. She combined our ideas on the subject with what little *she* knew, and a very fine lecture was the result. But it was unconscious cerebration."

I felt flattered by this learned explanation. It was not the young girl after all who had lectured, but the professor and myself. I was willing to accept this explanation. The only trouble was how to divide the partnership property between the professor and myself. This we were never able to do up to the time of his death, which occurred ten or fifteen years after. But I have always thought that that lecture of the professor's and mine was the greatest effort of our lives.

Now, Gentlemen of the Seybert Commission, let us for a moment ignore the facetious; let us lay aside that happy style of wit and humor that pervades the pages of your able and exhaustive report, and reason together.

What power or mental force was it that inspired that young girl, and gave to her utterance the wisdom of a sage,

and clothed her thoughts in language of sublime eloquence? Was it legerdemain or the work of a conjurer? Do you believe that possible? If not, was it her own self? And if it was, how did she know, by intuition, what savants have had to learn by long hours of patient, laborious study? Was she a veritable Admirable Crichton in crinoline? Why, even that remarkable young Scotchman was only an apt scholar, and had to learn before he knew. And it was his remarkable aptness in learning that has made his name famous over the civilized world. Not so with Mrs. Cora L. V. Hatch; her youth precludes the possibility of her having acquired extensive knowledge of all of the abstruse sciences; yet, in her so-called trance condition, her learning appeared to be that of a savant and her diction that of an accomplished orator. This lady is now Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond, and her wonderful eloquence has given her a world-wide reputation.

The phenomena of so-called Spiritualism are not new to this age or century. We have historic evidence of its existence before the Christian era, yet it is only within the last fifty years that mankind has seemed to understand either its object or its cause; and that which was once deemed demoniacal is now believed by Spiritualists to have been the fruitless efforts of spirits to communicate with the denizens of this world. It is certain that we have many instances of these phenomena related by witnesses the world never dared to impeach, and whose testimony is as worthy of belief as are the pages of sacred history itself.

In *The Story of Methodism*, a late and most interesting book, written by A. B. Hyde, D.D., Professor of Greek in the University of Denver, late Professor of Biblical Literature in Allegheny College, Pa., on page 40, in speaking of the childhood and youth of John Wesley, the author says:—

"The mother of the celebrated divine had some forefeeling that John was to be the foremost of her family; and she says with emphasis: 'I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child!'

"During these years strange 'noises' were heard at the Epworth parsonage. They were first heard in the whistling of the wind outside. Latches were lifted; windows rattled, and all metallic substances rang tunefully. In a room where persons talked, sang, or made any noise, its hollow tones gave all the louder accompaniment. There was a sound of doors slamming, of curtains drawing, of shoes dancing without a wearer. When any one wished to pass a door, its latch was politely lifted for them before they touched it. A trencher, untouched upon the table, danced to unheard music. The house-dog, with furious barking, met the unseen intruder the first day in brave mastiff style, but thereafter he sneaked, cowed and whining, behind some human friend. At family prayers the 'goblin' gave thundering knocks at the Amen, and when Mr. Wesley prayed for the king, the disloyal being pushed him violently in anger. The stout rector shamed it for annoying children, and dared it to meet him alone in his study, and pick up the gauntlet there. *It obeyed Mrs. Wesley.* If she stamped on the floor, and bade it answer, its response was instant. If one said, 'It is only a rat,' the noise was more fast and furious. At last the family seemed to enjoy their lively and harmless unseen guest, and when after two months he left them, they lost an amusement. Many, then and since, have tried to explain the cause. *It was thought to be a spirit strayed beyond its home and clime, as an Arabian locust has been found in Hyde Park.* Of such things this writer has no theory. There are more things in heaven and earth than his knowledge or philosophy can compass. Only he is sure that outside of this world lies a spiritual domain, and it is not strange that there should be intercommunication.

"The effect of these 'Epworth noises' on John Wesley's mind was excellent. It taught him to acknowledge fully the spiritual world, and at the same time neither to fear nor regard it. He believed in God every hour of his life; with spirits he had simply nothing to do. His calling did not cross theirs."

Robert Southey, in his *Life of Wesley*, in speaking of these manifestations, says that they continued in the

Wesley family in England, commencing in 1716, for over thirty years. Priestley refers to the Wesleyan phenomena as among the most striking on record. Samuel Babcock, in a letter inserted in the *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, No. XX., says :—

“There were some strange phenomena perceived at the parsonage at Epworth, and some uncommon noises heard there from time to time, which he was very curious in examining into, and very particular in relating. I have little doubt that he considered himself the chief object of their wonderful visitations. Indeed, his father's credulity was in some degree affected by it; since he collected all the evidences that tended to confirm the story, and arranged them with scrupulous exactness, in a manuscript consisting of several sheets, which is still in being. I know not what became of the ghost of Epworth; unless considered as a prelude to the noise Mr. John Wesley made on a more ample stage, it ceased to speak when he began to act.”

Chambers' Encyclopædia, in its article on John Wesley, relates how the paternal house was haunted by a ghost, but Goerres, in his *Die Christliche Mystik*, has given the best account of the disturbance, which remains unexplained to this day.

Gentlemen, how do you account for these facts? Were the noises at Epworth parsonage caused by legerdemain? The intelligent movements of inanimate objects feats of jugglery? Did some unseen magician frighten the brave mastiff, or did the keen vision of the noble animal see more than the Seybert Commissioners with their pocket looking-glass?

The evidence upon which these facts rest is too strong to be set aside by sneer or sarcasm. Your experience with sealed envelopes, printers' ink, magic paper, and séances affords no explanation. John Wesley himself and his father and mother believed them to be spirit visitations! Poor benighted souls! with what self-satisfied complacency you, gentlemen, can smile at their ignorant credulity, and *thank God* you are not as other men.

CHAPTER IX.

“In the multitude of COUNSELLORS there is safety.”

Proverbs xi. 14.

“Look here, upon this PICTURE and on THIS.”

SHAKESPEARE.

IN the year 1869 THE LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY appointed a committee consisting of thirty-six learned men, to investigate the phenomena of “Modern Spiritualism.” This committee met, and divided their body into six sub-committees of six members each. Immediately thereafter they proceeded to perform their duties, each sub-committee pursuing its own course in its researches. Four of them obtained results that convinced them that the phenomena they witnessed could not be accounted for by any known natural law; and that there was at their meetings an unseen force that moved ponderable objects, and that that force was intelligent. The fourth and sixth committee obtained no results. A learned scientist once remarked that a failure in experimenting was sometimes better than a success; for it proved that certain conditions were necessary to produce all natural phenomena, and that these conditions always depended upon natural law: not so with feats of jugglery or legerdemain; for there the conditions were always under the control of the performer. I publish the reports made by these sub-committees, that the reader, with little comment on my part, may observe the difference between the opinion of the thirty learned Englishmen and the Seybert Commissioners,—that the difference between “THIS PICTURE and *this*” may be clearly seen.

Surely if there "is safety in a multitude of counselors," then doth truth abide with the multitude of witnesses.

Another observable feature in this report, compared with the other, is its candor. The committee seemed to be impressed with the magnitude of their duty, and desirous of making a "thorough investigation," and of truthfully reporting the result. Reader, compare the two reports, and then, in mercy to the Seybert Commissioners, — although I am an attorney against them, — I ask you to deal as kindly with their reputation for truth and candor as the circumstances will justify.

I need say no more. I offer the two reports in evidence before you. They speak for themselves. The one all candor and apparent sincerity, the other like Shakespeare's simile of life. [See *Macbeth*, Act v. Sc. 5.]

At a meeting of the London Dialectical Society, held on Wednesday, the 6th of January, 1869, Mr. J. H. Levy in the chair, it was resolved: —

"That the Council be requested to appoint a committee, in conformity with By-law VII., to investigate the phenomena alleged to be Spiritual Manifestations, and to report thereon."

COPY OF THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL.

At a meeting of the Council of the London Dialectical Society, held on the 26th January, 1869, on the motion of Dr. Edmunds, a committee was appointed, in conformity with By-law VII., to investigate the phenomena alleged to be spiritual manifestations, and to report thereon. The committee to consist of the following members: —

H. G. Atkinson, Esq., F.G.S.
G. Wheatley Bennett, Esq.
J. S. Bergheim, Esq., C.E.
H. R. Fox Bourne, Esq.

Charles Bradlaugh, Esq.
G. Fenton Cameron, Esq., M.D.
John Chapman, Esq., M.D.
Rev. C. Maurice Davies, D.D.

Charles R. Drysdale, Esq., M.D.	Henry Jeffery, Esq.
D. H. Dyte, Esq., M.R.C.S.	Albert Kisch, Esq., M.R.C.S.
Mrs. D. H. Dyte.	Joseph Maurice, Esq.
James Edmunds, Esq., M.D.	Isaac L. Meyers, Esq.
Mrs. Edmunds.	B. M. Moss, Esq.
James Gannon, Esq.	Robert Quelch, Esq., C.E.
Gratton Geary, Esq.	Thomas Reed, Esq.
Robert Hannah, Esq.	C. Russell Roberts, Esq., Ph.D.
Jenner Gale Hillier, Esq.	William Volckman, Esq.
Mrs. J. G. Hillier.	Horace S. Yeomans, Esq.

Professor Huxley and Mr. George Henry Lewes to be invited to co-operate.

Drs. Chapman and Drysdale and Mr. Fox Bourne declined to sit, and the following names were subsequently added to the committee:—

George Cary, Esq., B.A.	J. H. Levy, Esq.
E. W. Cox, Esq., Serg.-at-Law.	W. H. Swepstone, Esq., Solicitor.
William B. Gower, Esq.	
H. D. Jencken, Esq., Barrister-at-Law.	Alfred R. Wallace, Esq., F.R.G.S.
	Josiah Webber, Esq.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

GENTLEMEN:—The Committee appointed by you to investigate the phenomena alleged to be spiritual manifestations, report thereon as follows:—

Your Committee have held fifteen meetings, at which they received evidence from thirty-three persons, who described phenomena which, they stated, had occurred within their own personal experience.

Your Committee have received written statements relating to the phenomena from thirty-one persons.

Your Committee invited the attendance and requested the co-operation and advice of scientific men who had publicly expressed opinions, favorable or adverse, to the genuineness of the phenomena.

Your Committee also specially invited the attendance of persons who had publicly ascribed the phenomena to imposture or delusion.

Your Committee, however, while successful in procuring the evidence of believers in the phenomena and in their supernatural origin, almost wholly failed to obtain evidence from those who attributed them to fraud or delusion.

As it appeared to your Committee to be of the greatest importance that they should investigate the phenomena in question by personal experiment and test, they resolved themselves into sub-committees as the best means of doing so.

Six Sub-committees were accordingly formed.

All of these have sent in reports, from which it appears that a large majority of the members of your committee have become actual witnesses to several phases of the phenomena without the aid or presence of any professional medium, although the greater part of them commenced their investigations in an avowedly skeptical spirit.

These reports, hereto subjoined, substantially corroborate each other, and would appear to establish the following propositions :—

1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, the floor, and walls of the room — the vibrations accompanying which sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch — occur, without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance.

2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind or adequate exertion of muscular force by the persons present, and frequently without contact or connection with any person.

3. That these sounds and movements often occur at the times and in the manner asked for by persons present,

and, by means of a simple code of signals, answer questions and spell out coherent communications.

4. That the answers and communications thus obtained are, for the most part, of a commonplace character; but facts are sometimes correctly given which are only known to one of the persons present.

5. That the circumstances under which the phenomena occur are variable, the most prominent fact being, that the presence of certain persons seems necessary to their occurrence, and that of others generally adverse; but this difference does not appear to depend upon any belief or disbelief concerning the phenomena.

6. That, nevertheless, the occurrence of the phenomena is not insured by the presence or absence of such persons respectively.

The oral and written evidence received by your committee not only testifies to phenomena of the same nature as those witnessed by the Sub-committees, but to others of a more varied and extraordinary character. This evidence may be briefly summarized as follows:—

1. Thirteen witnesses state that they have seen heavy bodies—in some instances men—rise slowly in the air and remain there for some time without visible or tangible support.

2. Fourteen witnesses testify to having seen hands or figures, not appertaining to any human being, but life-like in appearance and mobility, which they have sometimes touched or even grasped, and which they are therefore convinced were not the result of imposture or illusion.

3. Five witnesses state that they have been touched by some invisible agency on various parts of the body, and often where requested, when the hands of all present were visible.

4. Thirteen witnesses declare that they have heard musical pieces well played upon instruments not manipulated by any ascertainable agency.

5. Five witnesses state that they have seen red-hot coals applied to the hands or heads of several persons without producing pain or scorching; and three witnesses state that they have had the same experiment made upon themselves with the like immunity.

6. Eight witnesses state that they have received precise information through rappings, writings, and in other ways, the accuracy of which was unknown at the time to themselves or to any persons present, and which, on subsequent inquiry, was found to be correct.

7. One witness declares that he has received a precise and detailed statement which, nevertheless, proved to be entirely erroneous.

8. Three witnesses state that they have been present when drawings, both in pencil and colors, were produced in so short a time, and under such conditions, as to render human agency impossible.

9. Six witnesses declare that they have received information of future events, and that in some cases the hour and minute of their occurrence have been accurately foretold, days and even weeks before.

In addition to the above, evidence has been given of trance speaking, of healing, of automatic writing, of the introduction of flowers and fruits into closed rooms, of voices in the air, of visions in crystals and glasses, and of the elongation of the human body.

Many of the witnesses have given their views as to the sources of these phenomena. Some attribute them to the agency of disembodied human beings, some to Satanic influence, some to psychological causes, and others to imposture or delusion.

The literature of the subject has also received the attention of your Committee, and a list of works is appended for the assistance of those who may wish to pursue the subject further.

In presenting their report, your Committee, taking into consideration the high character and great intelligence of many of the witnesses to the more extraordinary facts, the extent to which their testimony is supported by the reports of the Sub-committees, and the absence of any proof of imposture or delusion as regards a large portion of the phenomena; and further, having regard to the exceptional character of the phenomena, the large number of persons in every grade of society and over the whole civilized world who are more or less influenced by a belief in their supernatural origin, and to the fact that no philosophical explanation of them has yet been arrived at, deem it incumbent upon them to state their conviction that the subject is worthy of more serious attention and careful investigation than it has hitherto received.

Your Committee recommend that this report and the reports of the Sub-committees, together with the evidence and correspondence appended, be printed and published.

REPORTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL SUB-COMMITTEES.

SUB-COMMITTEE No. 1.

Since their appointment on the 16th of February, 1869, your Sub-committee have held *forty* meetings for the purpose of experiment and test.

All of these meetings were held at the private residences of members of the Committee, purposely to preclude the possibility of pre-arranged mechanism or contrivance.

The furniture of the room in which the experiments were conducted was on every occasion its accustomed furniture.

The tables were in all cases heavy dining-tables, requir-

ing a strong effort to move them. The smallest of them was five feet nine inches long by four feet wide, and the largest, nine feet three inches long and four and a half feet wide, and of proportionate weight.

The rooms, tables, and furniture generally were repeatedly subjected to careful examination before, during, and after the experiments, to ascertain that no concealed machinery, instrument, or other contrivance existed by means of which the sounds or movements hereinafter mentioned could be caused.

The experiments were conducted in the light of gas, except on the few occasions specially noted in the minutes.

Your Committee have avoided the employment of professional or paid mediums, the mediumship being that of members of your Sub-committee, persons of good social position and of unimpeachable integrity, having no pecuniary object to serve, and nothing to gain by deception.

Your Committee have held some meetings without the presence of a medium (it being understood that throughout this report the word "medium" is used simply to designate an individual without whose presence the phenomena described either do not occur at all, or with greatly diminished force and frequency), purposely to try if they could produce, by any efforts, effects similar to those witnessed when a medium was present.

By no endeavors were they enabled to produce anything at all resembling the manifestations which took place in the presence of a medium.

Every test that the combined intelligence of your Committee could devise has been tried with patience and perseverance. The experiments were conducted under a great variety of conditions, and ingenuity has been exerted in devising plans by which your Committee might verify their observations and preclude the possibility of imposture or of delusion.

Your Committee have confined their report to *facts* witnessed by them in their collective capacity, which facts were *palpable to the senses, and their reality capable of demonstrative proof.*

Of the members of your Sub-committee about *four-fifths* entered upon the investigation wholly skeptical as to the reality of the alleged phenomena, firmly believing them to be the result either of *imposture* or of *delusion*, or of *involuntary muscular action*. It was only by irresistible evidence, under conditions that precluded the possibility of either of these solutions, and after trial and test, many times repeated, that the most skeptical of your Sub-committee were slowly and reluctantly convinced that the phenomena exhibited in the course of their protracted inquiry were veritable facts.

The result of their long-continued and carefully conducted experiments, after trial by every detective test they could devise, has been to establish conclusively, —

First: That under certain bodily or mental conditions of one or more of the persons present, a force is exhibited sufficient to set in motion heavy substances, without the employment of any muscular force, without contact or material connection of any kind between such substances and the body of any person present.

Second: That this force can cause sounds to proceed, distinctly audible to all present, from solid substances not in contact with, nor having any visible or material connection with, the body of any person present, and which sounds are proved to proceed from such substances by the vibrations which are distinctly felt when they are touched.

Third: That this force is frequently directed by intelligence.

At *thirty-four* out of the forty meetings of your Committee some of these phenomena occurred. A description

of one experiment, and the manner of conducting it, will best show the care and caution with which your Committee have pursued their investigations.

So long as there was contact, or even the possibility of contact, by the hands or feet, or even by the clothes of any person in the room, with the substance moved or sounded, there could be no perfect assurance that the motions and sounds were not produced by the person so in contact. The following experiment was therefore tried:—

On an occasion when eleven members of your Subcommittee had been sitting round one of the dining-tables above described, for forty minutes, and various motions and sounds had occurred, they, by way of test, turned the backs of their chairs to the table, at about nine inches from it. They all then knelt upon their chairs, placing their arms upon the backs thereof. In this position their feet were, of course, turned away from the table, and by no possibility could be placed under it, or touch the floor. The hands of each person were extended over the table at about four inches from the surface. Contact, therefore, with any part of the table could not take place without detection. In less than a minute the table, untouched, moved *four* times; at first about *five* inches to one side, then about *twelve* inches to the opposite side, and then, in like manner, four inches and six inches respectively.

The hands of all present were next placed on the backs of their chairs, and about a foot from the table, which again moved, as before, *five* times, over spaces varying from four to six inches. Then all the chairs were removed twelve inches from the table, and each person knelt on his chair as before, this time, however, folding his hands behind his back, his body being thus about eighteen inches from the table, and having the back of the chair between himself and the table. The table again

moved four times in various directions. In the course of this conclusive experiment, and in less than half an hour, the table thus moved, without contact or possibility of contact with any person present, thirteen times, the movements being in different directions, and some of them according to the request of various members of your Sub-committee.

The table was then carefully examined, turned upside down, and taken to pieces, but nothing was discovered to account for the phenomena.

The experiment was conducted throughout in the full light of gas above the table.

Altogether your Sub-committee have witnessed upwards of fifty similar motions without contact, on eight different evenings, in the houses of members of your Sub-committee, the most careful tests being applied on each occasion.

In all similar experiments the possibility of mechanical or other contrivance was further negated by the fact that the movements were in various directions, now to one side, then to the other; now up the room, now down the room—motions that would have required the co-operation of many hands or feet; and these, from the great size and weight of the tables, could not have been so used without the visible exercise of muscular force.

Every hand and foot was plainly seen, and could not have been moved without instant detection.

Delusion was out of the question. The motions were in various directions, and were witnessed simultaneously by all present. They were matters of measurement, and not of opinion or of fancy.

And they occurred so often, under so many and such various conditions, with such safeguards against error or deception, and with such invariable results, as to satisfy the members of your Sub-committee by whom the experi-

ments were tried, wholly skeptical as most of them were when they entered upon the investigation, that *there is a force capable of moving heavy bodies without material contact, and which force is in some unknown manner dependent upon the presence of human beings.*

Your Sub-committee have not, collectively, obtained any evidence as to the nature and source of this force, but simply as to *the fact of its existence.*

There appears to your Committee to be no ground for the popular belief that the presence of skeptics interferes in any manner with the production or action of the force.

In conclusion, your Committee express their unanimous opinion that the one important physical fact thus proved to exist, that *motion may be produced in solid bodies without material contact, by some hitherto unrecognized force operating within an undefined distance from the human organism, and beyond the range of muscular action,* should be subjected to further scientific examination, with a view to ascertain its true source, nature, and power.

SUB-COMMITTEE No. 2.

To the Committee appointed by the London Dialectical Society to investigate the phenomena alleged to be spiritual manifestations.

GENTLEMEN: We, one of the sub-committees appointed by you for the purpose of practically acquainting ourselves, if possible, with the above-mentioned phenomena, beg leave to report as follows:—

1. That we have held numerous meetings at the houses of Messrs. A—— and B——, members of your Sub-committee and of the Dialectical Society.

2. That the said Messrs. A—— and B—— were entire strangers to the manifestations in question and skeptical of the phenomena generally, and that no meetings in

connection with the subject had been previously held in either of their houses.

3. That, in addition to the members of your Sub-committee, the wives of Messrs. A— and B— took part at such meetings, as did also Mr. C—, a brother-in-law of one of your Sub-committee men.

4. That our meetings were held without the aid or presence of any professed mediums (so-called) and under circumstances that precluded the possibility of trick or deception.

5. That, for the purpose of a séance, we always assembled in the evening, and seated ourselves around a dining-table, upon which we lightly placed our hands, engaging in conversation.

6. That the rooms in which we so assembled were lighted by gas, and that we usually commenced with a full supply of light, which, if afterwards occasionally reduced, was always sufficient to enable us to read or write without difficulty.

7. That the phenomena termed “rapping,” “table-rapping,” and “table-moving” occurred at our first, and at many subsequent meetings.

8. That the table-moving referred to was in the nature of heaving, oscillation, or tipping; the table often moving in any direction suggested.

9. That, during such movements, our hands were sometimes removed from the table altogether without abating the phenomena, and that at all times we were careful not to induce any movements by either muscular action or pressure.

10. That “table-moving” ceased, or nearly ceased, after our first few meetings, apparently in favor of the rapping phenomena.

11. That the rappings in question did not always proceed from the table, but sometimes from the floor, the

walls, and the ceiling; frequently coming from parts of the room suggested by those present — but not always.

12. That the raps had a sound distinctive and distinguishable, appearing to be in rather than on the substance from whence they proceeded; sometimes, however, they sounded like detonations in the air.

13. That when we occasionally, by way of experiment, made series of raps in rhythmical order upon the table, and asked that the rhythms should be imitated, our requests were complied with by responsive raps exactly imitating the rhythms prescribed.

14. That our experience in regard to the phenomena we witnessed appears generally to be corroborative of the statements of many of the witnesses examined by you upon the subject, to the extent that such phenomena have, or appear to have, a basis of intelligence.

15. That this intelligence was principally manifested by replies more or less pertinent, and sometimes most unexpected in their character, to our spoken and audible questions, by original communications made to us as hereinafter mentioned.

16. That such replies and communications were made by means of raps given when the alphabet was pointed to, letter by letter, or spoken by one of the party — it having been previously understood that three raps should signify “yes,” two “doubtful,” and one “no.” This arrangement, however, was sometimes altered by way of test, but without disturbing the accuracy of the replies.

17. That through the processes detailed in the foregoing clause, we presumably established occasional communication with a number of spirits or intelligences, announced to be such by themselves, many of whom stated they were connected in various degrees of relationship to certain members of our party, for whom they professed a friendly regard.

18. That such presumed spirits displayed distinct individualities, each having a manner peculiar to itself, and rapping delicately, emphatically, or deliberately, as the case might be, expressing, as it were, character, mood, and temper.

19. That when we attempted to shorten the process of communication detailed in clause No. 16, by anticipating words or phrases which we thought were intended, we frequently found our anticipations emphatically negated in favor of more appropriate expressions, or of words of a different signification altogether; for illustrations upon this point, we refer you to the séances reported in clause No. 39.

20. That intelligence was further maintained by the occasional dictation to us of special conditions for our then observance, such, for instance, as requesting us to sit in a different order at the table; requiring one or more to sit away from it; asking for an increase or diminution of light, or for the appointment of some particular person to ask questions; directing us to link or unlink hands; to be more quiet in our conversation; to avoid disputation, etc.

21. That on our compliance with such directions the manifestations were variably intensified.

22. That we were convinced of the objective character of the phenomena from finding that persons skeptical as to the existence thereof invariably confirmed our own experiences even when suddenly introduced during the progress of the séance. As a case in point, we instance that when one of our sittings was far advanced, and the phenomena of table-moving and rapping were in full operation, we sent for a neighbor to witness them. He came immediately, the manifestations continuing without break or interruption, and presenting to him the same aspect that they did to ourselves, notwithstanding that he at any rate must have been free from any antecedent influence, mesmeric or otherwise.

23. That as a further evidence of the objectivity of the phenomena, we report that manifestations have occurred to us spontaneously upon occasions when we had not assembled for the purpose of a séance, and were not seated around any table. We instance (1st) that one evening, when some of the members of your Sub-committee were assembled at the house of Mr. A——, not, however, with any intention of then investigating the phenomena, the conversation turned upon a séance lately held by some of the members of your general Committee, at which Mrs. Marshall had been present, and when raps had proceeded from the piano-forte. While we were discussing the genuineness of these raps, the strings of Mr. A——'s piano-forte suddenly and simultaneously vibrated, although no person was near the instrument. As these sounds were twice or thrice repeated, followed by raps, and were too sonorous to be accounted for by any vibration of the house or room, we immediately examined the instrument internally and externally with great care, but without discovering any cause for the sounds produced; and even after such examination, raps proceeded from the instrument at intervals during the rest of the evening. This was the only occasion when phenomena other than "rapping" or "table-moving" occurred to your Sub-committee, and we think it right to add that no circumstance of the kind had ever before or has since happened in Mr. A——'s house. (2d) That upon another occasion, some time after we had concluded a séance, and while we were taking refreshment, the rappings returned with great vigor, proceeding simultaneously from various parts of the room. On asking the presumed intelligences their names, they informed us in reply that they were the spirits who had been in communication with us during the evening, and that they were in a happy and merry mood, and did not care to leave us. One of our party jocularly drank to their health, and

asked them to respond, which they did by volleys of raps, indicative, as they informed us, of laughter and good fellowship. Each ultimately bade us good night by a succession of raps, so to speak, in perspective, being at the commencement loud and rapid, but gradually diminishing in force and increasing in interval until out of hearing. These raps, we should state, were more like detonations in the air than the result of percussion on any hard substance.

24. That we instance as further evidence of the spontaneity of the phenomena, that frequently emphatic raps occurred by way of assent to, or dissent from, remarks made by your Sub-committee to each other. Thus, at a sitting during which the raps had been unusually sonorous and fluent, one of the party asked the presumed spirit then in communication to state where he died, but no answer was returned, notwithstanding the question was somewhat persistently repeated. This apparently abrupt termination to the most successful séance we had yet had, caused us much surprise, and we were conversing upon the subject, when it was remarked that as the presumed intelligences claimed to be spiritual, they probably rejected the application of such a term as "death" to themselves or their state of existence, it being likely that of whatever import death might be to the body, it would, as concerning the spirit, be the continuation of life under a new form. Scarcely had the speaker concluded, when loud raps again sounded on the table, such being given, as we were informed, by way of assent to the remarks just made. Arising out of this, a conversation of great interest took place between ourselves and the presumed intelligences. Death, we were informed, was, so far as the body was concerned, of comparatively trivial import, but as regarded the spirit, it was a birth into new experiences of existence; that spirit life was in

every respect human; that friendly intercourse and companionship were as common and pleasurable in spirit life as on earth; that although spirits took great interest in earthly affairs, they had no wish to return to their former state of existence; that communication with earthly friends was pleasurable, and desired by spirits, being intended as a proof to the former of the continuance of life, notwithstanding bodily dissolution; that spirits claimed no prophetic power. We were further informed that the two ladies in our party were mediums, and that others of our party were mediumistic, and might in time develop into mediums; that our séances would improve by being held periodically and frequently; that they could not state the result of séances with reference to health, or give us any information of invariable application as to conditions; that disputation amongst ourselves at a séance was a disturbing element, but that they liked joking and fun occasionally; that they knew the Dialectical Society, and were interested in its investigation of Spiritualism, but that they did not know whether such investigation would have any good result.

25. That the independence or objectivity of the intelligence regulating the phenomena appears to be evidenced by the fact that we have frequently received answers and communications unexpected in their character. For instance, we once inquired by way of test where a lady of our acquaintance then was, she being at that time in Bolton. In reply the word "in" was rapped out, and then the letter "b." This so far was satisfactory, but as the next letter given was "e," we regarded the answer as a failure. Going on, however, with the alphabet, "d" was our next letter, and this, we were told, completed the sentence. It being then past twelve o'clock at night, the appositeness of the reply "in bed" excited merriment, which was responded to by a series of raps. We then

gave the names of certain towns, and asked in which one of them the lady was staying. As each town was named, we got a single negative rap until we gave Bolton, when we immediately received the three raps indicative of "yes." It also happened at this séance that while we were sitting at a heavy dining-table with our hands linked (in compliance with a request made to us by one of the presumed spirits), one of us asked another spirit then in communication, whether it had sufficient power to move the table. The alphabet was asked for, and the words spelt out were "unlink hands." We had scarcely obeyed this instruction, when the table lurched round suddenly, and violently forced some of the party out of their chairs. This spirit claimed to be that of an acquaintance who had lately lost his life by a railway accident in America, and who, when living, was of a sportive disposition, and fond of feats of strength. He first announced his presence at our séances by a somewhat unparliamentary term of badinage that he and his companions had been in the habit of using towards each other, and when asked to which of two friends of his then present he applied the term, answered "both." He objected to making original communications; but being urged for one, at last replied by giving the message, "Tell my brother J—— I have visited you," it being somewhat singular that the brother in question a few days previously had much ridiculed the phenomena.

26. That we, your Sub-committee, did not succeed in ascertaining any specific conditions that would command the production of the phenomena — those that appeared to be necessary on one occasion seeming to be superfluous on another, while at many consecutive meetings the due observance by us of all the presumed conditions within our experience failed entirely. Upon this subject, however, we submit the following clauses by way of analysis:—

27. The phenomena were principally manifested under the conditions or circumstances specified in clauses Nos. 5, 6, and 20 of this report, we having under such conditions obtained manifestations in various rooms of the houses in which we met and at several tables, three of the latter being dining-room tables of full size; the attendance upon such occasions varying from five to seven members. The manifestations appeared generally to be aided on our part —

(a) By orderliness in the conduct of the séances.

(b) By a quiet, but not particularly passive, demeanor and conversation.

(c) By quietude in the house in which we assembled, we failing sometimes to obtain phenomena early in the evening, but obtaining them later, when the servants had retired and domestic noises had ceased.

(d) By a somewhat moderate supply of light.

On the other hand, we have occasionally had powerful manifestations when seated away from the table; when observing no particular order or ceremony; when engaged in animated conversation; when indulging in laughter and merriment; when ordinary household business was in progress; and with a full supply of light.

28. That sometimes, without any perceivable change of conditions, the manifestations became faint and rapidly died away, apparently beyond recall, thus closing our séance; while upon other occasions, without any particular regard to conditions, the manifestations continued strong and vigorous, we ourselves being obliged at last to break up the sittings, which usually lasted from one hour to two hours and a half.

29. That, as relating to the subject of conditions, we have noted the following facts: —

(a) That we invariably failed to obtain the phenomena in the dark.

(b) That at our few trials by daylight we invariably failed to obtain manifestations.

(c) That we invariably failed to obtain manifestations without the presence of the two ladies in our party.

(d) That our compliance with conditions dictated to us by the presumed spirits invariably intensified the manifestations at the time. (See clauses Nos. 20 and 21.)

30. That we have not discovered any conditions identical with those ordinarily deemed necessary to the production of the so-called electro-biologic or mesmeric phenomena, but often the reverse. Thus we may state, —

(a) That intentness or desire for the manifestations (as preparatory processes) far more frequently prefaced failure than success, we commonly finding that those séances were the most successful at which the phenomena occurred immediately, or almost immediately, we seated ourselves at the table.

(b) That, as detailed in clause No. 23, the phenomena sometimes occurred to us spontaneously and unsought.

(c) That no influences existed at our séances that impaired our powers of observation or discrimination, inasmuch as the remembrance of each person present thereat as to what had taken place invariably accorded with the experience of all the others, and was further corroborated by the notes taken at the time, as well as by independent testimony. (See clause No. 22.)

31. That whatever might be the force or power employed in the manifestations, or whatever the conditions under which the manifestations took place, we frequently noted that there appeared to be a desire to conserve or economize such force or power; for example: —

(a) We rarely obtained second replies to questions already answered, even when we inverted such questions for the purpose.

(b) The phraseology of communications was mostly

succinct, redundant words or terms being seldom, if ever, employed.

(c) We seldom had superfluous or meaningless raps, the rapping that took place conveying either original communications or answers to our questions.

(d) In order as it were to minimize the power or force referred to, the presumed intelligences sometimes preferred to give concise answers, rather than to make sustained communications. For instance, we once asked, somewhat persistently, for an original communication and received as such the words "will answer any question"; the same being a compliance with our request, clothed, however, in the form of a reply.

32. That from such observation of the phenomena, we have occasionally found it desirable as a condition to success, not to stimulate or overtax the rapping; while at other times no such precautions appeared to be necessary or were taken.

33. That from Good Friday, in March, 1869, until the end of the following month of May, the manifestations presented themselves under the conditions assumed to be such throughout this Report at our various meetings, with but few instances of failure.

34. That during the following months of June and July, we continued our meetings as before; but notwithstanding that we duly observed all the conditions assumed to be necessary, and that the two ladies of our party were present, manifestations took place upon two occasions only, and then of a subdued and apparently weakened character.

35. That failures and successes alike took place, under the same average condition of health, of weather, and of temperature.

36. That from August, 1869, to February, 1870, inclusive, your Sub-committee held no meetings and wit-

nessed no phenomena, but that on March 7th, 1870, the raps returned spontaneously, whilst two members of your Sub-committee and their wives were playing at whist, a third lady (a stranger to the phenomena) being present.

At the conclusion of the rubber a séance was arranged, when a few questions were answered by the presumed spirit, but no original communications were made.

37. That, as bearing upon the subject of conditions, we ought, perhaps, to state that a domestic event of what is generally termed an interesting nature took place with respect to one of the ladies of our party in the month of February, 1870, inasmuch as this may possibly afford some clue to the failure of the manifestations during and after the previous month of June.

38. As further illustrating the foregoing statements, your Committee think it advisable to give a short history of what took place at certain of their sittings, names, however, being for obvious reasons omitted or altered, and the terms "spirit" or "intelligence" being used for the sake of brevity to signify the power or force through which the various phenomena were produced. Our first sitting took place on the evening of Good Friday in 1869, there being six persons present, three of whom were members of the Committee. After a time, the table at which we had seated ourselves (and which we had, as a preliminary formality, carefully examined) began to move, at first slowly, but afterwards more quickly. During a pause, one of the party exclaimed, "What singular things the raps must be!" immediately upon which we heard, as if in response, two or three faint, but perfectly audible sounds, like the ticking of a clock, proceed from the center of the table. The question was at once asked, "Was a spirit present?" Three raps. "Did three raps mean 'yes'?" Several raps, as if in acquiescence. "If the spirit meant to communicate with us, should three

raps mean 'yes,' two 'doubtful,' and one 'no'?" "Yes."
"Would the spirit tell us its name through the alphabet?"
"Yes." The preliminaries being thus settled, one of the party was asked to speak aloud the letters. He did so. "A, B, C," up to "W," with which latter letter came one of the promised raps. The next letter was A, then L, and so on, until the word "Walter" had been given. "Has the spirit any other name?" was asked. "Will it tell us what it is?" "Yes." The same method which had produced the name "Walter" now gave us the surname of a gentleman present. "Is the spirit in any way related to Mr. A——?" we inquired. "Yes." "Will it state in what degree?" "Yes." More alphabet work, letter by letter, and the result, "Infant grand." "Infant grandfather?" somebody suggested. The ludicrousness of the suggestion caused us to laugh, in which the spirit appeared to join by a number of raps of different degrees of intensity. On again with the alphabet to the completion of the sentence, "Infant grand-uncle." Several questions having been answered by this spirit, we asked it for an original communication. The raps continuing, we expected the letters now taken down would form the message we were to receive, but, instead of such being the case, the words given were, "a new spirit," and it transpired from what subsequently took place, that a new intelligence was in communication with us. This spirit also answered a number of questions as to its name, and the time when it was in the flesh, etc., as, in fact, did also other spirits upon subsequent occasions; but as these replies partook more or less of the same character, and did not present anything peculiarly worthy of note, we have thought it better to confine our Report to a short statement of what took place at certain of our sittings where the most marked manifestations occurred, merely observing for your information, that at the sittings in

question not less than two of your Committee were present with their wives, and that the whole party never consisted of less than five, or more than seven persons.

39. At one of our sittings, organized without premeditation at the close of a musical evening, on the 7th of May, 1869, a spirit came, who, in reply to our inquiry, stated its name was Henry. As a lady present had lost a relative of that name, she became impressed with the idea that it was his spirit that had visited us, and this so affected her that we found it necessary to bring the sitting to a close. Two days afterwards we held a sitting in the dining-room of a member of the Dialectical Society, the party consisting of five persons. For a considerable time no manifestations took place, and we were about to break up the séance when two or three peculiarly sharp raps from the center of the table induced us to continue the sitting. Upon this occasion our hostess was seated in her usual place at the head of the table, having her husband on her right, a lady and gentleman on her left, and a gentleman opposite to her. The latter gentleman, therefore, occupied the position usually filled by the host at the foot of the table. The raps being heard, a question was asked whether the conditions were satisfactory. "No." "Does the spirit wish either of the party to change places?" "Yes." "Perhaps the spirit will state who is to move?" "Yes." The gentleman at the foot of the table, who had been appointed director of this séance, now named and pointed at each person present in turn, commencing with his right-hand neighbor. A single rap was given at each name until the host's turn had arrived, when three raps were heard, and ultimately (acting under instructions from the spirit) the host and the gentleman at the foot of the table changed places, an arrangement which at once placed the former in the position he, as master of the house, ordinarily occupied. The

effect this alteration had upon the conditions was at once apparent; the raps, which had been remarkably clear and decided before, becoming now louder and vibrative, sounding as if the table, an ordinary dining one, had been struck with a small hammer. "Will the spirit tell us its name?" "Yes — HENRY." When this name was given, we at once assumed that the spirit which had visited us on the occasion mentioned above had come to us again, and as the lady who had caused the séance to be broken up then was present now, we feared lest this sitting also might be abruptly terminated. This, however, did not turn out to be the case. All parties remained quiescent, and the spirit was asked to give the surname it had been known by on earth. It did so — "K ——" We had all expected that the spirit would have announced itself as the relative of the lady referred to, but it did not do so, the name given being that of a step-brother of our hostess who had died abroad fourteen years previously. This spirit replied in the usual manner to questions put to it by the director (who had never before known or heard of the existence of Henry K——), stating truly the name of the place where and the year in which it had left the flesh, such replies being given sharply and unhesitatingly as if for the purpose of identification. It then, as if satisfied that it had done all that could be required in that direction, persistently declined to answer any more questions, but intimated that it had a communication to make. This communication, carefully noted and taken down letter by letter, was as follows: "I love dear M——" (the Christian name of our hostess) "very much, although I ne" — At this point our hostess, remembering, as she informed us, that her brother had been an irregular correspondent, suggested "never wrote." "No." "Perhaps the spirit will proceed?" said the director. "Having 'ne' of the last word, we shall be glad to receive the next letter." The

interrupted sentence was resumed — “glected her when I was” — “Alive?” somebody suggested. “No.” “Living?” “No.” A rap, clear and distinct and strangely suggestive of annoyance being experienced by the spirit at the interruption of its communication. The director repeated the sentence as far as it had gone, and it was at once continued by the raps — “on earth. She ought to have had al” — “A letter,” suggested the hostess, her mind evidently dwelling on her brother’s shortcomings as a correspondent. “No.” The next letter rapped at was “L.” “We already have L” said the director. “The sentence as I have it is, ‘I love dear M—— very much, although I neglected her when I was on earth; she ought to have had al.’” This interruption produced a series of sharp and petulant raps from the spirit, as if it were calling the speaker to order. “The spirit means double ‘L’ and the sentence runs, ‘She ought to have had all.’” “My property” was next spelled out. “It was money. X——, my executor, has it.” It can be understood that a message of this personal nature thus communicated surprised all present, the hostess in particular, who became agitated, but without losing her presence of mind. While the name (a peculiar one) of the executor was being rapped out in a clear and decisive manner, letter by letter, she evidently strove to recall it to her memory, and in so doing hit upon one or two names somewhat similar to, but not quite the same as, the name given by the spirit, and which latter name transpired, upon reference to certain letters in the possession of the hostess, to be the correct one. The following conversation then took place with the spirit, the host himself putting the questions: — “Why have you made this communication to us?” “As a proof of spiritual existence, and a token of my love for M——.” “Do you wish any steps taken to recover the money?” “No; money does not give

happiness." "Are you angry with X—— for what he has done?" "Animosity does not exist in spirit land." The spirit now intimated to us that he was about to depart, and bade us good night in the usual manner, by a series of raps, loud at first, and gradually dying away into the distance.

40. Your Committee have since ascertained that Henry K—— resided abroad at the place named to us, several years previously to his death, and that shortly after that event happened, Mr. X——, his executor, wrote to the trustees of certain funded property in England forming part of the estate of the deceased, requesting them to send him a portion thereof to enable him to pay certain liabilities, and authorizing them to pay the balance to our hostess (then Miss ——), who was the residuary legatee, and who received the same, but nothing beyond; the statements of Mr. X—— upon the subject of the liabilities referred to passing unchanged, and no account whatever having been rendered by him of his executorship. Such being the facts of the case, your Committee inquired whether any doubts had ever arisen in the minds of the lady or her husband as to the trustworthiness of Mr. X——; but they have been informed that so far from having any suspicion upon the subject, the lady was at the time so impressed with the honourable conduct of the gentleman referred to (whom, it appears, she never saw, and from whom she has not heard since), that she transmitted to him when the matter was settled a sum of money (above £50) wherewith to purchase on her behalf some acceptable article as a present from her to his wife and family. We are also assured by the host, that when he first became acquainted with his wife, and she occasionally spoke of Mr. X——, she always did so with great respect, and that nothing whatever had transpired down to the time of the séance to cause her to alter her *opinion*; that with regard to himself he had been per-

fectly passive upon the subject throughout, and had long since forgotten the fact that such a person as Mr. X—— had been in existence; that he had never, in any way, troubled himself about or investigated the position of his wife under her brother's will, the deceased having lived and died on the other side of the globe, and the whole matter having been entirely closed some considerable time previous to the marriage; and that it was only since the communication in question had been made that he had perused certain letters which were in his wife's possession, and which had not been looked at for many years, and ascertained from them the facts stated in this clause.

41. At another séance, held in the evening of the 2d July last, six persons were present, four of whom were members of your Committee. During a considerable period no manifestation of any phenomena took place, and it was only after a long interval, and when one of the party had left, that some raps came of a character different to any we had previously heard. We several times asked this spirit whether it would tell us its name, and received in reply two dull thuds from the table, and it was only after much perseverance that we at last obtained an affirmative answer, followed up by heavy lumpish raps at the following letters: "JEM CLARKE." "Would Jem Clarke tell us why he has visited us?" we asked. "No." "Would he make any communication to us?" "No." "Would he answer any questions?" "Doubtful." We were discussing the question we should next put, when the lady in whose house we were assembled, exclaimed, "Clarke! Clarke! why, that is the name of my housemaid, who is about to leave me. Perhaps the spirit is some relative of hers." Three thuds from the table. "Have you come to see her?" "Yes." "She appears unhappy. Do you know why she is going away?"

No response. "Are you her guardian spirit?" "Yes." "Perhaps an ancestor of hers?" Three more thuds, given as if with difficulty, and Mr. James Clarke had evidently left us.

42. Before concluding this our Report we deem it to be right to state for your information that when we commenced our investigation your Committee consisted of three members only, all of whom were totally unacquainted with the phenomena except by rumour, and that a fourth member was subsequently added who had a previous acquaintance with the subject, but who did not join our party until the last of our successful meetings in May.

SUB-COMMITTEE No. 3.

It was proposed and arranged by your Sub-committee that its members should meet regularly and punctually from time to time, and try by the commonly prescribed forms to educe what is called "Medium power" from amongst themselves, or their intimate friends, who might be invited to attend with them.

It was determined that any unusual occurrence which might take place under such conditions should be thoroughly examined and tested and the result carefully noted.

A primary condition of any possible success from this plan, so your Sub-committee were informed, was that all the members should continue to attend a certain number of meetings with regularity. But this was found to be impracticable, chiefly in consequence of the locality chosen for the meetings being so far from the homes of a majority of the members. From this circumstance but ten meetings were held, and the results obtained were of less importance than were some of those which other Sub-committees, more favorably placed, have had opportunities of witnessing. Our members, however, have all had, at

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various times, the privilege of attending with one or more of the other Sub-committees, and have thus been placed in a position to form larger and more accurate opinions than could have been drawn from such elements merely as were obtained in the experiments of this Sub-committee.

The visitors who attended our meetings, on all occasions but one, which is specified in the minutes, were well known to one or more of our members. Two were gentlemen, and three ladies. Of the gentlemen, one is a clergyman of the Church of England, the other is a civil engineer. Each attended on two occasions. The ladies are near relatives of two of the members of the Committee.

We have therefore good grounds for assuming that everything which has been described as occurring took place in the presence of ladies and gentlemen of honest purposes, whose conduct throughout the experiments was guided by the most perfect good faith.

Owing, probably, to the small number of our sittings, the development of our "mediumistic" power did not proceed so far as to enable us to witness here such plain, unquestionable evidence of the presence of strange forces as has been manifest to the members of some of the other Sub-committees — as in the movement of heavy tables repeatedly without contact of any kind. But we have made careful experiments in order to distinguish between the forces applied by such contact as was found to be necessary, and that which would be required to produce some of the actual movements witnessed, and we find that though the pressure exerted by a man's hands, as laid on the table at these séances, varies with every movement or change of position, and according to the proportion of arm-weight bearing on it, there are tolerably well-defined limits at which, in the various attitudes, conscious pressure or muscular effort begins.

Taking a very extreme and unusual case, in order to

give the utmost extent of allowance for unconscious pressure, we will suppose that from fatigue or indolence a person assumes a listless attitude, sitting forward on the seat of his chair, and leaning heavily against the back of it, his hands and arms stretched nearly horizontally forward, and resting on the table to about the middle of the forearm, the muscles of the back and shoulders being entirely relaxed. The "dead-weight" thus thrown on the table will be nearly eight pounds. In this attitude, probably, the largest amount of involuntary force is applied. If these conditions be modified merely by sitting more upright, so that the arms are bent at the elbows to about right angles, the pressure then becomes about four to five pounds. If the muscles of the back and shoulders are kept in a certain degree of tension, and the arms drawn backwards until the wrists and hands only rest freely on the table, the pressure then becomes about two pounds. This is the attitude most commonly assumed, so that a pressure of two pounds may be taken as the usual amount of force exerted by an attentive sitter, though, when some of the more active "manifestations" are in progress, the pressure which each person exerts generally ranges downward from this to less than an ounce, or to the lightest touch possible.

These data apply to a man of ordinary size and weight. They will apply equally, or nearly so, to the force which a woman exerts under similar conditions, if one-third be deducted in all cases. Practically they give a sufficiently exact indication of the amount of force which may be unconsciously exerted in various ways by persons engaged in these séances.

By careful experiments with the smaller of the tables, we have found that the force necessary to tilt it when applied at the most favourable angle, viz., 90° , to the legs, *is nearly twenty-one and one-half pounds.* But in apply-

ing the force in this direction, some obstruction must be placed on the floor against the legs ; otherwise it will slide, and not tilt at all at this angle.

Even when the force is applied at 45° the tendency is to slide rather than to tilt or cant, to ensure which the angle must not much exceed 30° , at which the pressure necessary is about forty-three and one-half pounds. As will be seen, the force necessary to tilt it from one end is very much greater. A man of ordinary strength standing at one side of the table, with his hands having the necessary cohesion with the smooth surface of the top, finds he can *push* it along the floor with tolerable ease. To drag it towards him is not so easy, and he finds great difficulty in moving it from right to left in the direction of its length.

With his hands placed in a similar manner on the top surface at one end, he cannot on the smooth floor tilt up the opposite end.

It was found that two men could do this ; but the hand of a third laid lightly on the opposite end, made it impossible even for two to produce this tilting endwise. In the easiest of these imitative movements, if three other persons occupy the three remaining sides of the table as in the actual séance, the additional weight, though really very small, is so greatly multiplied by leverage that it is impossible for the one experimenter to produce some of the movements without great and evident exertion, whilst others he cannot do at all.

Yet usually, during the séances this table moved in all directions, from side to side, from end to end, and round and round, over a large room, with great ease and smooth regularity as well as with a kind of rushing speed, halting suddenly, and as suddenly starting off again. The movements were often made with an ease and facility which indicated a large reserve of unexpended force. At other times, on the contrary, they were so weak as to be scarcely discernible.

In some of the movements of this table—which is without castors—a rattling sound was made, as though its legs were rapidly “making and breaking contact” with the floor. An opinion was expressed that this was probably caused by unconscious pressure from the “mediums,” but our subsequent experiments showed that where a downward pushing pressure was applied by the hands, the table glided along noiselessly, and the rattling sound could be exactly imitated when we lifted a considerable portion of the weight off the floor, and so dragged the table along, thus indicating that the forces which in the séance produced the noisy movements in question must have been applied *upwards* and forwards, whilst it was evident that the only forces which could have been applied by the mediums must have been directed *downwards* and forwards.

Probably the strongest exhibition of force through this table occurred when two ladies were sitting, one at one side, the other at one end, and a gentleman at the other end, the side opposite the first lady being vacant, except that Mr. Myers sat there to watch proceedings. Some of the tilts under these circumstances were very strong, even violent, as though, when one side had been tilted up to a certain height, a powerful spring became released, and the descent was so sharp, strong, and sudden, that it shook the strong floor of the room, and could be heard all over and outside the house.

Mr. Myers, in his report, says: “I noticed that the table invariably tilted toward No. 2, at times with so much force that, in the position in which I was sitting, I was unable to prevent it rising, though I succeeded in modifying the vigor of the tilts.”

The side No. 2 was occupied by one of the ladies. Mr. Myers was seated at the opposite side.

As an example of the force exerted through the

larger loo table, we may refer to the minutes of April 8th. It would be difficult to estimate accurately the effort required to produce the rapid whirling movements described there. To cant up this table—which weighs more than ninety pounds—until its top touches the floor, and it remains resting partly on the outer rim of this, and on the triangular foot base, requires a considerable lift; but to raise it just beyond this point, and until it is poised on the rim alone—as was twice done on the evening referred to—requires, on the smooth floor, at the largest practicable angle, to prevent sliding—a force of about eighty-five pounds; though at right angles, and precaution taken to prevent sliding, forty-five pounds is sufficient.

In the initiative experiment it was found that, besides actual lifting force, a considerable force, as well as great care, was necessary to preserve the balance on one point of the rim, and to prevent swinging or rolling in its ascent; but in the actual séance no swaying or tendency to lose balance was at any time felt.

To slide this table—which is on castors—takes a force of from fifteen to twenty pounds, according to the set of the castors, or slight inequalities in the floor.

None of the experimenters were conscious of contributing in any appreciable degree, in the production of the force thus shown to be necessary to the effects witnessed, all hands being lightly kept on the top of the table throughout the movements.

Besides the evidence thus afforded of the presence of this not generally recognized force, we believe we have had in these experiments evidence of an intelligence directing it—as in moving by request in a particular direction—tilting a certain number of times as required—and by tilts or taps spelling out words or sentences addressed to those present.

It will be observed that it was only when certain per-

sons were present that any evidence of this force and intelligence was presented. Two friends were particularly noticed as indispensable. These were a clergyman and the wife of another clergyman, both of the Church of England.

The room in which we held our meetings has a smooth, polished floor, and is twenty-eight feet long by twenty-two feet wide.

These minute details we have felt to be necessary, in order that the Committee might be made as fully acquainted as possible with all the conditions and circumstances connected with the production of the occurrences described in the minutes.

In concluding our report, we desire to express to the committee our unanimous conviction that the phenomena we have witnessed in the course of these investigations, though comparatively unimportant, *do*, nevertheless, raise some most important questions in science and philosophy, and deserve the fullest examination by capable and independent thinkers.

SUB-COMMITTEE No. 4.

Nothing occurred in presence of this Sub-committee worth recording.

SUB-COMMITTEE No. 5.

The Committee appointed to meet Mr. Home for the purpose of investigating the alleged spiritual phenomena produced through his agency report thereon as follows:—

The first séance was held on the 2d of April, 1869. The entire Committee, consisting of Dr. Edmunds, Messrs. Bergheim, Bradlaugh, Dyte, and Gannon, were present, as were also Lord Adare, the Master of (now Lord) Lindsay, General B——, and Mr. Jencken. Previous to the

formation of the circle, Mr. Home begged permission to change his dress, for the purpose of demonstrating that he had no machinery of any kind concealed about his person. This was accordingly accomplished in the presence of Dr. Edmunds and Mr. Bergheim, the former reporting to the Committee, on his return, that Mr. Home possessed an extremely muscular and elastic frame. The séance was then held in the dining-room; a table of more than ordinary solidity and weight being used. At the request of Mr. Home, Mrs. Edmunds consented to assist at the séances, and attended all the subsequent meetings.

The séance occupied two hours and twenty minutes, and the manifestations were of the most trifling character, consisting of a few raps and slight movements of the table. The motion was of the usual swaying, irregular kind, and the raps were very feeble.

General B— was slightly affected with convulsive movements in his right arm, which he declared to be beyond the control of his will. A pencil was handed to him, and his hand wrote some irregular characters which could not be deciphered by any one present. At the close of the séance, and after the departure of Mr. Home and the visitors, Dr. Edmunds demonstrated that the dining-table, although large and massive, could be easily moved by slight muscular exertion.

On the 9th April the investigation was resumed, Mr. Home being again accompanied by Lord Adare and the Master of Lindsay.

All the members of the Committee, with the exception of Dr. Edmunds, were present.

Within half an hour after the commencement of the séance, a few slight raps were heard which seemed to come from the spot where Mr. Home was sitting. Messrs. Bradlaugh and Dyte were under the impression that they proceeded from the leg of the table, and at the request of

Mr. Home, the former gentleman seated himself on the floor to guard against the possibility of fraud.

The table now moved slightly in the same manner as before, and the raps continued; Mr. Bradlaugh asserting that they came from the leg of the table, and Messrs. Bergheim, Home, and Jencken maintaining that they were produced upon its surface. In the course of the evening Mr. Home seemed slightly affected; he started, exclaimed, "Ah!" and covered his face with his hands. A few minutes afterward the Master of Lindsay stated that he was unable to move his left arm, and that the muscles were quite rigid. It was examined by Mr. Dyte, but that gentleman was unable to discover any abnormal symptoms.

The raps continued at intervals; but, although the sitting was prolonged until a quarter past ten o'clock, no further phenomena of any importance were observed.

On Friday, the 16th, Mr. Home again met the Committee accompanied by the Master of Lindsay and Lord Adare.

The "circle" was formed at half past-eight o'clock, and the raps and movements of the table were again repeated. The raps were very feeble, and resembled the sounds produced by the tapping of a finger-nail on the table. In reference to the movements, Dr. Edmunds explained that the table moved with remarkable ease on its castors, and could be pushed from its position by the exertion of a very slight force.

The fourth and last séance of the Committee afforded only the most feeble phenomena, and owing to the subsequent illness of Mr. Home, the investigation was not revived. During the inquiry, Mr. Home afforded every facility for examination and appeared to be anxious to further the object which the Committee had in view. It *is almost unnecessary* to add that nothing occurred at any

of the meetings which could be attributed to supernatural causes. The members had fully expected that they would have witnessed some of the alleged extraordinary levitations of Mr. Home, but he explained at the opening of the inquiry that the phenomena produced through his agency were of uncertain manifestation, and that he had no power whatever to produce them at will.

The séances were held in a fully lighted room.

SUB-COMMITTEE No. 6.

This Committee met four times, but failed to obtain any phenomena that deserve to be recorded. On one occasion, a lady visitor brought with her two little girls aged apparently about eight and ten years respectively, whom she declared to be mediums. The children were placed at a small chess-table, which they proceeded deliberately to rock to and fro, to their own intense delight, and to the amusement of the company.

At no other meeting was there even the pretence of any spiritual phenomena.

Gentlemen of the Seybert Commission, as individuals,—as candid, earnest, Christian men,—to you, not in your public capacity, but as private citizens, I appeal from the decision recorded in your report. From “Philip in his abnormal state to Philip in his normal condition, I appeal!” On reflection, are you satisfied with either the manner of your investigation, or the matter contained in your report? Does your experience in the “sealed letters” part of your researches, with advertised charletans, really convince you that all claims for spiritual visitations are false or fraudulent? Do you not know that there are thousands of family circles in our land, as pure and truthful as your own, where fathers, mothers, brothers, and

sisters believe they have held communion with those that once occupied the now vacant chair by their hearth-stone? That in those sacred home séances no legerdemain could come? That the bereaved and afflicted have there found a consolation that faith alone would fail to give? Was it the act of Christian gentlemen for you to point your impious fingers of wit and sarcasm at the cherished family altar, the sacred home circles of those who believe what they have seen and heard, and who derive priceless joy from the evidence there given them? Most ruthlessly did the Iconoclasts of the eighth century — under the edict of Leo III. — commit their sacrilegious outrages on the temples of God, and the cherished belief of the early Catholic Christians. The choicest works of art as well as the holiest emblems of a Christian faith were destroyed by their Vandalism, and to-day the term is one of opprobrium and contempt. Yet those who executed an infamous decree of a tyrannical emperor were a horde of ignorant soldiery, who but obeyed the commands of a power they dared not disobey. Not wholly so with you, for you are not ignorant, although you may be obedient. Yet the household images of thousands of Christian people you would destroy if you could.

But you will say, “ *We never have witnessed any of these home circles. We never saw any of these manifestations.*”

“ You have not, 'tis true; 'tis true 'tis pity
And pity 'tis true.”

Yet you might have done so, as did the members of the Dialectical Society, had you so desired. All you had to do was to make your wish known. There are hundreds of private séances among the friends and relatives of those that “ have passed away ” who doubtless would welcome you into their circles, if assured that you came in friendly spirit, and would conduct yourselves with your

usual urbanity, and regard for the feelings of others; many mediums who would scorn to answer your newspaper advertisement or receive compensation from the Seybert bequest. Yet, gentlemen, as there are some people who are unduly sensitive, and dislike to have their honesty impeached, even by innuendoes, and as one of your number — I believe the one “with trained habits of investigation” — is a little inclined to by-play remarks (asides), etc., such as are recorded in your report, let me suggest to you that you appoint him a sub-committee to pursue your original line of investigation, while the rest of you seek admission into private circles. There is many a home that would gladly open its doors to you, and welcome you into its inner sanctuary, were it not for the unwarrantable impression caused by your report that it was not truth that you were seeking, but fraud! and that when you have found it, you rejoice with exceeding great joy!

It seems to be the impression of many good and thoughtful men, that had your honourable body been members of the Committee of the Dialectical Society, the failure of Sub-committee No. 4 to obtain any results, and the playful gambols of two little children before Sub-committee No. 6 would undoubtedly have satisfied you that the experiments before the other sub-committees were all jugglery or legerdemain, and that the cry of fraud! fraud! would have echoed throughout all Gath, and been published in all the streets of Askelon.

This would have been in accordance with the logic of your report: verily there are none so blind or deaf in this world as those

“ Who having eyes see not, and having
Ears will not hear.”

CHAPTER X.

"Now what I want is Facts. — Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. — Stick to Facts, sir."

Thomas Gradgrind, in DICKENS' Hard Times.

READER, I have a few more facts to call your attention to. They are narrated in *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, by William Crookes, F.R.S., reprinted from the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, London, 1874. There is not living at this day a more learned scientist than Professor Crookes, neither a more skillful experimenter nor accurate investigator. He was the discoverer of the new metal "thallium," and the inventor of the philosophical wonder, the radiometer. His reputation is world-wide and his integrity unimpeachable.

The following chapter is from his book, in his own words, and gives but a faint idea of all he saw in his investigations which extended through a number of years.

To disbelieve or doubt the testimony of such a man is simply stupidity. The Seybert Commission knew of this evidence, and failed to consider it, and therefore I give a small portion of it to the public as evidence in my case.

THE PHENOMENA OF PERCUSSIVE AND OTHER ALLIED
SOUNDS.

The popular name of "raps" conveys a very erroneous impression of this class of phenomena. At different times during my experiments I have heard delicate ticks, as with the point of a pin; a cascade of sharp sounds, as from an induction coil in full work; detonations in the air; sharp metallic taps; a cracking like that heard when

a frictional machine is at work ; sounds like scratching ; the twittering as of a bird, etc.

These sounds are noticed with almost every medium, each having a special peculiarity ; they are more varied with Mr. Home, but for power and certainty I have met with no one who at all approached Miss Kate Fox. For several months I enjoyed almost unlimited opportunity of testing the various phenomena occurring in the presence of this lady, and I especially examined the phenomena of these sounds. With mediums, generally, it is necessary to sit for a formal séance before anything is heard ; but in the case of Miss Fox it seems only necessary for her to place her hand on any substance for loud thuds to be heard in it, like a triple pulsation, sometimes loud enough to be heard several rooms off. In this manner I have heard them in a living tree — on a sheet of glass — on a stretched iron wire — on a stretched membrane — a tambourine — on the roof of a cab — and on the floor of a theatre. Moreover, actual contact is not always necessary ; I have heard these sounds proceeding from the floor, walls, etc., when the medium's hands and feet were held — when she was standing on a chair — when she was suspended in a swing from the ceiling — when she was enclosed in a wire cage — and when she had fallen fainting on a sofa. I have heard them on a glass harmonicon ; I have felt them on my own shoulder and under my own hands ; I have heard them on a sheet of paper, held between the fingers by a piece of thread passed through one corner. With a full knowledge of the numerous theories which have been started, chiefly in America, to explain these sounds, I have tested them in every way that I could devise, until there has been no escape from the conviction that they were true objective occurrences not produced by trickery or mechanical means.

An important question here forces itself upon the at-

tention. *Are the movements and sounds governed by intelligence?* At a very early stage of the inquiry it was seen that the power producing the phenomena was not merely a blind force, but was associated with or governed by intelligence: thus the sounds to which I have just alluded will be repeated a definite number of times; they will come loud or faint, and in different places at request; and by a pre-arranged code of signals, questions are answered, and messages given with more or less accuracy.

The intelligence governing the phenomena is sometimes manifestly below that of the medium. It is frequently in direct opposition to the wishes of the medium: when a determination has been expressed to do something which might not be considered quite right, I have known urgent messages given to induce a reconsideration. The intelligence is sometimes of such character as to lead to the belief that it does not emanate from any person present.

Several instances can be given to prove each of these statements, but the subject will be more fully discussed subsequently, when treating of the source of the intelligence.

MOVEMENTS OF HEAVY SUBSTANCES WHEN AT A DISTANCE FROM THE MEDIUM.

The instances in which heavy bodies, such as tables, chairs, sofas, etc., have been moved, when the medium has not been touching them, are very numerous. I will briefly mention a few of the most striking. My own chair has been twisted partly round, whilst my feet were off the floor. A chair was seen by all present to move slowly up to the table from a far corner, when all were watching it; on another occasion an arm-chair moved to where we were sitting, and then moved slowly back again

(a distance of about three feet) at my request. On three successive evenings a small table moved slowly across the room, under conditions which I had specially pre-arranged, so as to answer any objection which might be raised to the evidence. I have had several repetitions of the experiment, considered by the Committee of the Dialectical Society to be conclusive, viz., the movement of a heavy table in full light, the chairs turned with their backs to the table, about a foot off, and each person kneeling on his chair, with hands resting over the back of the chair, but not touching the table. On one occasion this took place when I was moving about so as to see how every one was placed.

THE RISING OF TABLES AND CHAIRS OFF THE GROUND,
WITHOUT CONTACT WITH ANY PERSON.

A remark is generally made when occurrences of this kind are mentioned, Why is it only tables and chairs which do these things? Why is this property peculiar to furniture? I might reply that I only observe and record facts, and do not profess to enter into the why and wherefore; but, indeed, it will be obvious that if a heavy inanimate body in an ordinary dining-room has to rise off the floor, it cannot very well be anything else but a table or a chair. That this propensity is not specially attached to furniture, I have abundant evidence; but, like other experimental demonstrators, the intelligence or power, whatever it may be, which produces these phenomena, can only work with the materials which are available.

On five separate occasions a heavy dining-table rose between a few inches and one and one-half feet off the floor, under special circumstances, which rendered trickery impossible. On another occasion, a heavy table rose from the floor in full light, while I was holding the

medium's hands and feet. On another occasion the table rose from the floor, not only when no person was touching it, but under conditions which I had pre-arranged, so as to assure unquestionable proof of the fact.

THE LEVITATION OF HUMAN BEINGS.

This has occurred in my presence on four occasions in darkness. The test conditions under which they took place were quite satisfactory, so far as the judgment was concerned; but ocular demonstration of such a fact is so necessary to disturb our pre-formed opinions as to "the naturally possible and impossible" that I will here only mention cases in which the deductions of reason were confirmed by the sense of sight.

On one occasion I witnessed a chair, with a lady sitting on it, rise several inches from the ground. On another occasion, to avoid the suspicion of this being in some way performed by herself, the lady knelt on the chair in such manner that its four feet were visible to us. It then rose about three inches, remained suspended for about ten seconds, and then slowly descended. At another time two children, on separate occasions, rose from the floor with their chairs, in full daylight, under (to me) most satisfactory conditions, for I was kneeling and keeping close watch upon the feet of the chair, and observing that no one might touch them.

The most striking cases of levitation which I have witnessed have been with Mr. Home. On three separate occasions have I seen him raised completely from the floor of the room, — once sitting in an easy-chair, once kneeling on his chair, and once standing up. On each occasion I had full opportunity of watching the occurrence as it was taking place.

There are at least a hundred recorded instances of Mr.

Home's rising from the ground, in the presence of as many separate persons ; and I have heard from the lips of the three witnesses to the most striking occurrence of this kind — the Earl of Dunraven, Lord Lindsay, and Captain C. Wynne — their own most minute accounts of what took place. To reject the recorded evidence on this subject is to reject all human testimony whatever ; for no fact in sacred or profane history is supported by a stronger array of proofs. The accumulated testimony establishing Mr. Home's levitations is overwhelming. It is greatly to be desired that some person whose evidence would be accepted as conclusive by the scientific world — if indeed there lives a person whose testimony *in favor* of such phenomena would be taken — would seriously and patiently examine these alleged facts. Most of the eye-witnesses to these levitations are now living, and would doubtless be willing to give their evidence. But in a few years such *direct* evidence will be difficult, if not impossible, to be obtained.

THE APPEARANCE OF HANDS, EITHER SELF-LUMINOUS
OR VISIBLE BY ORDINARY LIGHT.

The forms of hands are frequently *felt* at dark séances, or under circumstances where they cannot be seen. More rarely I have *seen* the hands. I will here give no instances in which the phenomenon occurred in darkness, but will simply select a few of the numerous instances in which I have seen the hands in the light.

A beautifully formed small hand rose up from an opening in a dining-table and gave me a flower ; it appeared and then disappeared three times at intervals, affording me ample opportunity of satisfying myself that it was as real in appearance as my own. This occurred in the light, in my own room, whilst I was holding the medium's hands and feet.

On another occasion a small hand and arm, like a baby's, appeared playing about a lady who was sitting next to me. It then passed to me and patted my arm and pulled my coat several times.

At another time a finger and thumb were seen to pick the petals from a flower in Mr. Home's button-hole and lay them in front of several persons who were sitting near him.

A hand has repeatedly been seen by myself and others playing the keys of an accordion, both of the medium's hands being visible at the same time, and sometimes being held by those near him.

The hands and fingers do not always appear to me to be solid and life-like. Sometimes, indeed, they present more the appearance of a nebulous cloud partly condensed into the form of a hand. This is not equally visible to all present. For instance, a flower or other small object is seen to move; one person present will see a luminous cloud hovering over it, another will detect a nebulous-looking hand, whilst others will see nothing at all but the moving flower. I have more than once seen, first an object move, then a luminous cloud appear to form about it, and lastly, the cloud condense into shape and become a perfectly formed hand. At this stage, the hand is visible to all present. It is not always a mere form, but sometimes appears perfectly life-like and graceful, the fingers moving and the flesh apparently as human as that of any in the room. At the wrist, or arm, it becomes hazy, and fades off into a luminous cloud.

To the touch, the hand sometimes appears icy cold and dead, at other times, warm and life-like, grasping my own with the firm pressure of an old friend.

I have retained one of these hands in my own, firmly resolved not to let it escape. There was no struggle or effort made to get loose, but it gradually seemed to re-

solve itself into vapor, and faded in that manner from my grasp.

DIRECT WRITING.

This is the term employed to express writing which is not produced by any person present. I have had words and messages repeatedly written on privately marked paper, under the most rigid test conditions, and have heard the pencil moving over the paper in the dark. The conditions — pre-arranged by myself — have been so strict as to be equally convincing to my mind as if I had seen the written characters formed. But as space will not allow me to enter into full particulars, I will merely select two instances in which my eyes as well as ears were witnesses to the operation.

The first instance which I shall give took place, it is true, at a dark séance, but the result was not less satisfactory on that account. I was sitting next to the medium, Miss Fox, the only other persons present being my wife and a lady relative, and I was holding the medium's two hands in one of mine, whilst her feet were resting on my feet. Paper was on the table before us, and my disengaged hand was holding a pencil.

A luminous hand came down from the upper part of the room, and after hovering near me for a few seconds, took the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper, threw the pencil down, and then rose up over our heads, gradually fading into darkness.

My second instance may be considered the record of a failure. "A good failure often teaches more than the most successful experiment." It took place in the light, in my own room, with only a few private friends and Mr. Home present.

Several circumstances, to which I need not further allude, had shown that the power that evening was strong.

I therefore expressed a wish to witness the actual production of a written message, such as I had heard described a short time before by a friend. Immediately an alphabetic communication was made as follows: "We will try." A pencil and some sheets of paper had been lying on the center of the table; presently the pencil rose up on its point, and after advancing by hesitating jerks to the paper, fell down. It then rose and again fell. A third time it tried, but with no better result. After these unsuccessful attempts, a small wooden lath, which was lying near upon the table, slid towards the pencil, and rose a few inches from the table; the pencil rose again, and, propping itself against the lath, the two together made an effort to mark the paper. It fell, and then a joint effort was again made. After a third trial the lath gave it up, and moved back to its place; the pencil lay as it fell across the paper, and an alphabetic message told us, "We have tried to do as you asked, but our power is exhausted."

PHANTOM FORMS AND FACES.

These are the rarest of the phenomena I have witnessed. The conditions requisite for their appearance appear to be so delicate, and such trifles interfere with their production, that only on very few occasions have I witnessed them under satisfactory test conditions. I will mention two of these cases.

In the dusk of the evening, during a séance with Mr. Home at my house, the curtains of a window, about eight feet from Mr. Home, were seen to move. A dark, shadowy, semi-transparent form, like that of a man, was then seen by all present, standing near the window, waving the curtain with his hand. As we looked, the form faded away and the curtains ceased to move.

The following is a still more striking instance. As in the former case, Mr. Home was the medium. A phantom form came from the corner of the room, took an accordion in its hand, and then glided about the room playing the instrument. The form was visible to all present for many minutes, Mr. Home also being seen at the same time. Coming rather close to a lady who was sitting apart from the rest of the company, she gave a slight cry, upon which it vanished.

SPECIAL INSTANCES WHICH SEEM TO POINT TO THE AGENCY
OF AN EXTERIOR INTELLIGENCE.

It has already been shown that the phenomena are governed by an intelligence. It becomes a question of importance as to the source of that intelligence. Is it the intelligence of the medium, of any of the other persons in the room, or is it an exterior intelligence? Without wishing at present to speak positively on this point, I may say that whilst I have observed many circumstances which appear to show that the will and intelligence of the medium have much to do with the phenomena, I have observed some circumstances which seem conclusively to point to the agency of an outside intelligence, not belonging to any human being in the room. Space does not allow me to give here all the arguments which can be adduced to prove these points, but I will briefly mention one or two circumstances out of many.

I have been present when several phenomena were going on at the same time, some being unknown to the medium. I have been with Miss Fox when she has been writing a message automatically to one person present, whilst a message to another person on another subject was being given alphabetically by means of "raps," and the whole time she was conversing freely with a third

person on a subject totally different from either. Perhaps a more striking instance is the following:—

During a séance with Mr. Home, a small lath, which I have before mentioned, moved across the table to me, in the light, and delivered a message to me by tapping my hand; I repeating the alphabet, and the lath tapping me at the right letters. The other end of the lath was resting on the table, some distance from Mr. Home's hands.

The taps were so sharp and clear, and the lath was evidently so well under control of the invisible power which was governing its movements, that I said, "Can the intelligence governing the motion of this lath change the character of the movements, and give me a telegraphic message through the Morse alphabet by taps on my hand?" (I have every reason to believe that the Morse code was quite unknown to any other person present, and it was only imperfectly known to me.) Immediately I said this, the character of the taps changed, and the message was continued in the way I had requested. The letters were given too rapidly for me to do more than catch a word here and there, and consequently I lost the message; but I heard sufficient to convince me that there was a good Morse operator at the other end of the line, wherever that might be.

THEORIES TO ACCOUNT FOR THE PHENOMENA OBSERVED.

First Theory.—The phenomena are all the results of tricks, clever mechanical arrangements, or legerdemain; the mediums are impostors, and the rest of the company fools.

It is obvious that this theory can only account for a very small proportion of the facts observed. I am willing to admit that some so-called mediums of whom the

public have heard much are arrant impostors, who have taken advantage of the public demand for spiritualistic excitement, to fill their purses with easily earned guineas; whilst others who have no pecuniary motive for imposture are tempted to cheat, it would seem, solely by a desire for notoriety. I have met with several cases of imposture, some very ingenious, others so palpable that no person who has witnessed the genuine phenomena could be taken in by them.

An inquirer into the subject finding one of these cases at his first initiation is disgusted with what he detects at once to be an imposture; and he not unnaturally gives vent to his feelings, privately or in print, by a sweeping denunciation of the whole genus "Medium." Again, with a thoroughly genuine medium, the first phenomena which are observed are generally slight movements of the table, and faint taps under the medium's hands or feet. These, of course, are quite easy to be imitated by the medium, or any one at the table. If, as sometimes occurs, nothing else takes place, the skeptical observer goes away with the firm impression that his superior acuteness detected cheating on the part of the medium, who was consequently afraid to proceed with any more tricks in *his* presence. He, too, writes to the newspapers, exposing the whole imposture, and probably indulges in moral sentiments about the sad spectacle of persons, apparently intelligent, being taken in by imposture which he detected at once.

There is a wide difference between the tricks of a professional conjurer, surrounded by his apparatus, and aided by any number of concealed assistants and confederates, deceiving the senses by clever sleight of hand on his own platform, and the phenomena occurring in the presence of Mr. Home, which takes place in the light in a private room that almost up to the commencement of the séance has been occupied as a living-room, and sur-

rounded by private friends of my own, who not only will not countenance the slightest deception, but who are watching narrowly everything that takes place. Moreover, Mr. Home has frequently been searched before and after the séances, and he *always* offers to allow it. During the most remarkable occurrences I have occasionally held both his hands, and placed my feet on his feet. On no single occasion have I proposed a modification of arrangements for the purpose of rendering trickery less possible which he has not at once assented to, and frequently he has himself drawn attention to tests which might be tried.

I speak chiefly of Mr. Home, as he is so much more powerful than most of the other mediums I have experimented with. But with all I have taken such precautions as place trickery out of the list of possible explanations.

Be it remembered that an explanation to be of any value must satisfy *all* the conditions of the problem. It is not enough for a person, who has perhaps seen only a few of the inferior phenomena, to say, "I suspect it was all cheating," or, "I saw how some of the tricks could be done."

Second Theory.—The persons at a séance are the victims of a sort of mania or delusion, and imagine phenomena to occur which have no real objective existence.

Third Theory.—The whole is the result of conscious or unconscious cerebral action.

These two theories are evidently incapable of embracing more than a small portion of the phenomena, and they are improbable explanations for even those. They may be dismissed very briefly.

I now approach the "Spiritual" theories. It must be remembered that the word "spirits" is used in a very vague sense by the generality of people.

Fourth Theory.—The result of the spirit of the medium, perhaps in association with the spirits of some or all of the people present.

Fifth Theory. — The actions of evil spirits or devils, personifying who or what they please, in order to undermine Christianity and ruin men's souls.

Sixth Theory. — The actions of a separate order of beings, living on this earth, but invisible and immaterial to us; able, however, occasionally to manifest their presence; — known in almost all countries and ages as demons (not necessarily bad), gnomes, fairies, kobolds, elves, goblins, Puck, etc.

Seventh Theory. — The actions of departed human beings — the spiritual theory *par excellence*.

Eighth Theory (The Psychic Force Theory). — This is a necessary adjunct to the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th theories, rather than a theory by itself.

According to this theory the "medium" or the circle of people associated together as a whole is supposed to possess a force, power, influence, virtue, or gift, by means of which intelligent beings are enabled to produce the phenomena observed. What these intelligent beings are, is a subject for other theories.

Again I call the attention of my jury to the fact that Professor Crookes, whose testimony I have given in this chapter, was in London at the time George S. Fullerton visited England on his voyage of discovery: Why did not this prominent member of the Seybert Commission seek an interview with the learned scientist, if he was really desirous of ascertaining the truth? He went to Germany to find evidence of Professor Zöllner's insanity, and most industriously did he prosecute his search; and on his return he published a story that will forever rival the celebrated novel, Wilkie Collins' "Moonstone." And I believe literary critics agree that that story embodies the largest amount of fiction, based upon the smallest array of facts, of any purely imaginative work published — before the Report of the Seybert Commissioners.

CHAPTER XI.

“ ‘Tis strange — but true ; for truth is always strange ;
Stranger than fiction.”

BYRON'S *Don Juan*.

“ Truth is the highest thing that man may keep.”

CHAUCER : *The Frankeleines Tale*.

IN closing the testimony in this case I call two witnesses to testify to phenomena they witnessed at Cassadaga Lake, with the mediums I visited there. I could have called a hundred others who had a similar experience, but do not think it necessary. The two gentlemen whose several statements I now give, are so well known, and their reputation for truth is so far above doubt or impeachment, that those who would not believe them are so mentally constructed as to doubt everything, even their own capabilities of telling the truth ; and their opinion would be as valueless to the world as to themselves, and of no possible consequence in the examination of the facts alleged in this case.

With the candid reader, who judges the motives and acts of his fellow-men by his own inner consciousness, this brief chapter of evidence will have its due weight and consideration. How it may affect the minds of the Seybert Commissioners, is one of those things that, as Lord Dundreary says, —

“ No fellow can find out.”

W. J. INNIS.

OIL CITY, Oct. 14, 1887.

Statement of W. J. Innis of the manner in which he obtained the writing on the slate No. 1 : —

During nearly all the month of August last I was at Cassadaga Lake, and while there became very much interested in what is called "spirit independent slate writing," and visited—at an appointed time—one of the mediums. It was necessary to appoint a time for the séance, as they were always engaged from one to two days ahead, giving an hour to each sitter.

I procured my slates from a store on the grounds, cleaned them thoroughly on both sides, proceeded to the cottage of the medium, *taking my slates with me*. The medium was in his room, in the second story of the cottage, seated at a wide-top, common pine table. I seated myself at the opposite side, laying my two slates down close to me, and in my sight all the time.

I then wrote five or six questions, to as many of my departed friends, on slips of soft paper from a common writing-tablet. I folded each question immediately after writing it, so that I know the medium had no opportunity of seeing them or knowing what the questions were. I then lifted the top slate, and the medium placed a small piece of pencil on the bottom one: I placed the top slate back again, and clasping the two together, and holding them in my hand, turned them upon their edges. I gave the medium my handkerchief, which he tied around the slates while I held them. I then took all the slips of paper containing the questions in my right hand, none of which had been touched by the medium: grasping the slates tightly, I held them out towards him—up to this time he had not touched them; he then reached over and clasped them with both his hands, his thumbs being on top and his fingers underneath the slates.

In a few moments I heard the writing commence. The sound made by the pencil could be plainly heard. When the writing was completed, three very distinct raps were heard on the slates. The medium then untied the hand-

kerchief from the slates while I held them. I lifted the top slate and saw on the bottom one three messages—see photograph No. 1—which had been most certainly written thereon while I held the slates in my hand,—the two at the top of the slate being in almost “microscopic” letters, and interlined with each other; and appeared to be in two distinct styles of letters. The names subscribed to these communications were those of two persons to whom I had addressed my communications. I had requested the lady to send a message to her husband who lives in California, and had simply asked the gentleman for a message. The other message on this slate is remarkable for having come entirely unsolicited, and unexpected by me; I had not written a question to my father—from whom the message purports to come—on either of the pellets; and I am confident that the medium did not know his name, or that he was dead. It seems to have been written to me in consideration of a statement often made by me that I did not believe the writing was generally done by those whose names were subscribed to it. The proof of this is in the message itself; also the last name commences with an E; whereas if written by him, it would have been an I.

I also procured a number of writings between slates from another medium,—always on my own slates,—and in the public hall of the hotel, in daylight, in the presence of any guests who happened to pass by. In getting writings from this medium no questions were asked, no table used. The medium and myself sat facing each other, holding the slates together until the writing was finished.

I am certain as I can be of anything in this world that the writing was not done by jugglery or legerdemain.

(Signed)

W. J. INNIS.



My dear Mrs. M. I have been
very glad to hear from you
and hope you are all well.
I am well and hope to see
you soon. I have not had
time to write you more
fully but will do so when
I have an opportunity.
I am ever your affectionate
son,
John M.

My dear Mrs. M. I have been
very glad to hear from you
and hope you are all well.
I am well and hope to see
you soon. I have not had
time to write you more
fully but will do so when
I have an opportunity.
I am ever your affectionate
son,
John M.

State of Pennsylvania, } ss.
 Venango Co.

Before me, a notary public, personally came W. J. Innis, by me known to be a person of good repute, who upon his oath states that the facts stated in the foregoing statement are just and true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 17th day of October, A.D. 1887. MARTIN CAREY, <i>Notary Public.</i>	}	WM. J. INNIS.
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WALTER ANDERSON.

Statement of Walter Anderson, proprietor of the Riddell House, Bradford, Pa. :—

In October, 1886, Mr. Keeler, a medium, stopped at my house. While he was there, I procured two new slates, put a small piece of pencil between them, and tied them together. I also wrote the names of several departed friends on pieces of paper, with interrogatories to each, rolled the paper up into small pellets; with my slates and questions thus prepared I went to the room occupied by the medium. I had the slates concealed under my coat. The medium was seated at the opposite side of the table. I reached the slates across the table, and he took hold of them. Soon I heard the pencil I had placed between the slates commence to write. I looked under them and all around them; we held them some distance above the table. Soon the pencil ceased writing. I moved back, untied the slates, and saw on the inside of the lower one a communication written in a fine, lady-like handwriting, and signed by a name I had written on one of the papers that were rolled up into pellets in such a way that no one could have read them without opening them — which I know was not done by

the medium. The communication was quite lengthy, and was an intelligent answer to the question I had written on one of the papers.

I replaced the pencil, closed the slates as before, and immediately it commenced to write again, much louder than before. When it had ceased writing, I opened the slates and saw another communication, purporting to come from my brother, whose name I had written on one of the slips of paper. His signature was written to the communication.

I am as positive that the writing was done by the pencil between the two slates while I held them in my hands, and without contact with the medium, as I am that the sun rises in a cloudy morning. I know I was not deceived, that it was no feat of a magician. I know that the slates were not out of my sight one moment, and that I held them in my hands while the writing was done.

In the month of July last (1887) I visited Cassadaga Lake. While there, I visited another medium, Charles E. Watkins. My wife was with me. I was told to take two slates, put a small fragment of pencil between them, and tie them together, and lay them under a tree twenty feet distant, yet in plain sight. I did so, watching them all the time; in a few moments I was told to pick them up; I did so. Before touching them, I placed my ear near them, and distinctly heard the pencil writing. I opened the slates and found a long communication signed with the name of my wife's sister, — and an intelligent answer to a question my wife had written on a piece of paper which the medium could not have read. The slates were new purchased by myself. There could have been no deception in this experiment.

One day while at the store talking with several gentlemen, Mr. Watkins came in. Mr. Thomas Skidmore said, "Watkins, when are you going to give me a slate writ-

ing?" He replied, "Almost any time"—and was moving away as if in a hurry. All at once he suddenly stopped, and mentioning the name of a person, said, "She is here now, and will write." He bit off a piece of pencil, laid it between two new slates; Mr. Skidmore took hold of the slates with him; the writing commenced immediately, and continued a short time, then we heard three distinct raps. Upon opening the slates, one of them was filled with very fine writing almost like engraving, signed with the name of Mr. Skidmore's daughter.

Here again there could have been no deception. It was in daylight; no table or other device near. It was in the presence of several intelligent gentlemen, who watched the proceedings closely. Deception was impossible in this instance.

At another time I procured two new slates, placed a small piece of pencil between them, tied them together, at my own house; I also wrote my questions there. I went to the room of the medium. I kept the slates in my lap; a table was between the medium and myself. At length he told me to hold the slates out a little from my person. He came around where I was, placed the tips of his fingers on my shoulder. The pencil commenced to write, and continued a few moments, when I heard three raps. I took the slates home before I opened them, when I found written on them two quite lengthy communications from two friends who were dead, and their names were signed to them. At another time my wife and I received communications on slates that the medium did not touch, we holding them out of his reach. It is simple nonsense to talk of legerdemain or jugglery in these instances. I know there was no deception in them, if I know anything from the evidence of my senses.

I have seen others receive communications under circumstances that absolutely precluded the possibility of

deception, and have received a number myself that I have not the space or time to describe.

Respectfully,

WALTER ANDERSON.

State of Pennsylvania, }
McKean County. } ss.

Walter Anderson having been sworn in due form of law, deposes and says that the facts set forth in the foregoing statement are true in every particular.

Sworn to and subscribed before me }
Oct. 20, 1887. }
JOHN D. WILSON, } WALTER ANDERSON.
Notary Public. }

CHAPTER XII.

SUMMARY.

“One thing is because another is not ;
 One thing is, therefore another is ;
 One thing is not, therefore another is ;
 One thing is not, therefore another is not.”

QUINTILIAN.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SEYBERT COMMISSION: In your Report you have presented, in a most able manner, the frauds you have detected in the so-called “spirit manifestations” you have witnessed: I have presented to the same tribunal of Public Opinion what I have seen and heard, together with the testimony of a number of witnesses of undoubted credibility, and many of whom are men known to the scientific world as eminent scientists and investigators of undoubted ability and acumen.

“Now let us reason together.”

Does it follow logically, that because you did not see, others did not? Admitting that you are truthful, should you not extend the same charity and courtesy to others? “Men under similar circumstances act similarly;” “*One thing is, therefore another is.*” You, having no motive to falsify, tell the truth in relating what you saw; therefore it is probable that other good men who had no motive to prevaricate, and who were moved by the same impulses that influenced you, were equally truthful. Now is it not evident to your unbiased minds that even if all you saw in your investigation was fraudulent, *that* does not prove that the phenomena seen by others were fraudulent also?

Does it matter how many frauds you witnessed, if what others, equally competent observers, saw was not tainted therewith?

No, gentlemen, you might write volumes of like experience, every page of which narrated a fraud, and yet one single well-authenticated truth would confound it all. Your testimony is negative as to the issue of the existence of "spirit manifestations"; mine is positive. And though you pile *Ossa* upon *Pelion* of such evidence, it would avail nothing against one single clearly established fact.

The frauds you narrate may have existed, and so may the facts I have proven. You have no right to say "all men are liars" because you have been unfortunate in your limited associations. The circle of your life and experience does not circumscribe within its boundaries all the morality or intelligence of mankind. There are depths in the great ocean of Nature's mysteries your lead and line never sounded. There are heights in her vast altitudes beyond the reach of your feeble vision. There are secrets in her limitless arcana your penny mirror never yet reflected. When we contemplate the vast number and infinite variety of natural phenomena occurring around us, and compute the number of natural laws known to science; when we compare Nature's known with her unknown decrees, her solved with her unsolved problems, — how limited appears our knowledge, and how limitless the vast unexplored territory whereon the foot of the scientist has never trod. And, gentlemen, as you know more than some men of some things, so do other men know more than you of other things. And in our search after knowledge we cannot always depend upon our own researches, but must take the testimony of others.

The question before the court of public opinion in this issue is: Do the phenomena claimed by the Spiritualists

actually exist? How can that question be satisfactorily answered, save by an appeal to human testimony? And as the most momentous actions of both men and nations are governed by that evidence, why hesitate to receive it here? If the witnesses I have called in this case are truthful and competent, then they *did* see what they assert, and there is an "*intelligent force*" unknown to science, or to our common experience, which, under certain conditions, manifests itself to observers. It may be true that accomplished magicians may *feebly* imitate its manifestations; nevertheless that force exists, if its phenomena have been actually seen and heard.

It is evident, then, that the issue is narrowed down to the single question: *Are the phenomena proven?* Have competent observers, who so testify, actually seen them? If they have not, then should our courts of justice be abolished; for in them the most momentous interests of human life are decided upon just such testimony as is presented to the world in the claims of "Modern Spiritualism." If the evidence of our senses is not to be believed, if reputable men and women are not to be credited when they narrate what they saw and heard, then may God forgive us all for the injustice we have done either as judges, advocates, or jurors, when we have been called upon to decide upon the guilt or innocence of our fellow-men. I have been instrumental, in my professional life, in sending two men to the gallows, and hundreds to the penitentiary, on just such evidence as this. The whole science of the law of evidence is based upon the general principle that witnesses do not testify falsely when they have no motive to induce them to prevaricate. If this is not so, why go through the solemn formalities of administering an oath in our courts? Why, with uplifted hand, or holding the sacred volume to his lips, is the witness enjoined to "*tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing*

but the truth, and that as he shall answer to God at the great day!—if, after all, he can only relate what his *mistaken* senses have told him, and which may not be true? If human testimony is not to be relied upon, then are our courts of law a miserable farce, and our judgment and reason but as a broken staff, which if we lean upon, will pierce our hands. Then is the boasted justice of our tribunals but as—

“An ocean nymph, a mountain naiad,
A fabled goddess to be dreamed of but not enjoyed.”

But we are gravely informed by pseudo-philosophers “that our senses are unreliable, that they often deceive us.” Do they? How often do they falsify compared with the facts they relate? In all our waking hours we do not perform a single act but upon the assurance of our senses. Every step we take with confidence on the solid earth is with the knowledge given us by their past testimony that the ground will sustain our tread. We stretch out our hand to grasp the commonest objects of life, only on the assertion of our senses that the object is within our reach. Do we not place implicit confidence in our senses of smell, sight, touch, seeing, and tasting? And how often are we deceived by them, compared with the number of times they tell us the truth? Not once in a million of instances; and the reputation of a witness for veracity whose relations to falsehood and truth stand as one to a million, will never be successfully impeached in a court of justice. So much confidence have I in their evidences that if either of the mediums that I visited at Cassadaga Lake should publicly announce that all his experiments there were legerdemain, yet without explaining how they were performed, I could not believe him. It would be a question of veracity between him and my senses. I have known the latter so much longer than the

former, they have always been so thoroughly reliable and truthful to me, that I could not discredit them on the simple word of a comparative stranger. More than that, if the medium was an old acquaintance, if for years I had known him well as a person of credibility, yet would his simple statement fail to convince me. So confident am I that I saw what I have related in my open letter, that no human testimony uncorroborated by the evidence of my senses would bring conviction to my mind. You see, belief is not a matter of volition, but a mental phenomenon as independent of human will as is the motion of the heart or lungs. No amount of verbal testimony could convince you that you did not see the stealthy fingers of the pretended medium you describe, open the slates "*under the table*" and write thereon; and for the same reason no verbal testimony could convince me that adroit fingers wrote the communications on the slates I held in my hands, under such circumstances as to absolutely preclude the possibility of such an act. Our testimony would be of equal value; yours would be proof of what you saw, mine of what I saw; yet your evidence would not be proof that such phenomena as I describe could not have happened.

Scores of scientific investigators have seen not only what I witnessed, but much that was more unaccountable; and they have made it the subject of the closest investigation. Thousands of people have witnessed it at their home séances, where no fraud could be perpetrated without detection. How far, then, does your evidence go to disprove the existence of the phenomena that have been the subject of books written by the most learned men of this century, and which have become as familiar as household words in so many family circles? But you have the means of satisfying the public mind, if you will condescend to do so. If your Report is true, three of your

number have learned from jugglers how it is all done ; yet you will not divulge the secret. In our courts, “*suppressio veri*” by a witness on the stand is as great a crime as “*expressio falsi*.”

But you say that the phenomena of so-called “spirit manifestations” could not have happened, because our senses bear testimony against them ; that if they occurred as narrated, they were supernatural ; that our senses never have witnessed anything but what has happened in accordance with natural laws ; and you repeat my argument against me. Here the error is in your premise, not in your conclusion. The inferential argument in your Report is the general or common one used against “spirit manifestations” by all those who do not believe in them, and syllogistically may be stated as follows : —

Supernatural phenomena cannot occur ;
 “Spirit manifestations” are supernatural ;
 Therefore “spirit manifestations” cannot occur.

The fault of your logic is in your *major* and *minor* premises ; if they were true, of course your conclusion would necessarily follow.

To my mind your *major* proposition states a self-evident fact. *Supernatural* — *i.e.* “above nature” ; I cannot believe that such events are possible. Whatever has happened or eventually will occur, must be in accordance with the laws of nature — which is but another term for “the laws of God.” No phenomena ever could have occurred, above and beyond the influence of the unchangeable and inflexible laws of the Creator.

It is true that certain phenomena do happen, whose conditions and laws we do not understand ; yet that is no evidence of the supernatural, but only that we do not know the natural powers that are slumbering in the vast universe, and that are only occasionally manifested. To our limited knowledge many of the most ordinary occurrences

of life are shrouded in mystery; yet that is no evidence that they are supernatural. The savages of Central Africa, if informed that under certain conditions water became a solid rock, in their ignorance might well believe *that phenomenon above nature*; and so it would be, so far as their limited knowledge of natural laws extended. Yet these savages are not more ignorant of the laws that cause and govern the congelation of water, than are our most learned savants of the mysteries of that incomprehensible thing, that loves, and hates, and fears, and fears not; and, from its cerebral throne, directs all human actions. What does the learned physiologist know of the great *ego* that constitutes our mental personality? Comparatively nothing. The scalpel of the anatomist has, it is true, invaded its sanctuary, —

“The dome of thought, the palace of the soul,” —

but always to find it desolate. The throne would remain yet covered with all its regal trappings of veins, arteries, nerves, and cellular tissues; but its seat would be vacant. The power that once sat there in all the royal splendor of human intellect has gone forever, leaving not a trace of its former presence. Science in searching for the cause of its absence finds all the wonderful organism of the physical body perfect, and apparently awaiting the return of the mysterious power that once gave it warmth and motion. At last, in one of the arteries is found an “*embolism*,” a little obstruction to the flow of the currents of life, and the cause of the death is scientifically explained. But who comprehends it?

What has become of the spirit that once made its home in this beautiful fabric that will soon be given back to its mother earth? The most acute observation of man cannot trace its footsteps even to the borders of the great unknown; faith tries to follow it in vain. Hope searches

for its presence and becomes despondent in the failure of its pursuit. A few hours ago there lived in this inanimate body a mighty intellect; there learning had a home, and song and poetry an abiding-place; there eloquence clothed thought in its splendid drapery; there joy smiled in unison with pleasure, and sorrow wept in sympathy with suffering and woe; there philanthropy gave in kindness, or avarice coveted more; there love beamed forth in kindly glances, or anger frowned defiantly. We know that these emotions are not a part of the physical body, as well as we know and can name the chemical elements that enter into its composition. We know that they are not the result of a chemical affinity or a combination of matter in definite proportions. We are certain that the laws that govern inorganic matter will not apply to our emotions or our thoughts; and therefore we must know that St. Paul stated a scientific fact when he said, "*there is a natural body; and there is a spiritual body.*"

It does not follow as a scientific fact that the spiritual body dies with the physical, or natural body — as the apostle terms it. If our emotions and thoughts were the result of a chemical combination of inanimate matter, then we can well understand that when that combination became disintegrated, the emotions or thoughts must die. But as a combination of matter cannot evolve thought or emotion, their existence does not necessarily depend upon matter, although matter may be necessary to them as a means of manifestation, or as drapery for their spirit forms. When the "natural body" dies, what becomes of the spiritual body? where does it go? Our senses do not and cannot tell us that it is dead; of this their evidence would only be negative — they can only say we do not know; but as to the fact that it lives, our senses can tell us as positively as they can of any other life when they see its manifestations.

The manifestation of spirit life would not be supernatural, but in accordance with *its* laws, though they were unknown to us.

The Christian world believes in a spirit life ; but where does it exist? Neither hope nor faith can tell us.

What are its powers, its means and mode of movement? What are the laws that govern it? Can it again revisit the earth, and recognize those it once loved, feared, or hated? If it can, it must be evident to every thinking mind that such visits would be governed by the laws that now control it, and not supernatural. If this is true, then your *minor* premise is false, and your conclusion illogical.

But we have evidence, as positive as human testimony can make it, that such visitations do occur. The personal individualities of the deceased have made themselves known to their friends by intelligent acts and words ; they have related events known only to themselves and those earthly friends ; yet their visits are not supernatural, but in exact accord with the laws of their new being ; — and to learn those laws and the conditions they impose constitutes the whole volume of spiritual philosophy.

The facts on which this philosophy is based, like the facts of all other systems or theories of science, can only be proven by human experience, and then propagated only by human tongue or hand. Should we discard this class of evidence, it would be but to ignore all the text-books of law, history, and science ; for they are but the testimony of credible witnesses. When Professor William Crookes discovered the new metal *Thallium* and published the fact to the world, the world believed his statements, and does to this day, although not one in a million of its inhabitants has ever seen it ; yet, when he discovers, by scientific investigation, other existences, and publishes that fact to the world, the Seybert Commissioners cry fraud ! and *legerdemain* ! and the unthinking populace repeat the cry through the length and breadth of the land.

You gentlemen seem to think that all of the great investigators of "Modern Spiritualism" that have preceded you were insane. Should you live the period allotted to man, and continue your investigations under the same charitable frame of mind, you will find yourselves in the condition of an inmate of a madhouse who, when asked by a visitor why he was there, replied, "Oh! merely from a difference of opinion. I said all the world was mad; and all the world said I was mad—and the world had it by a large majority!"

Your chairman believes that "we are such stuff as dreams are made on," and "our little life is rounded with a sleep." This sentiment closes your Report, and of course is sanctioned by your respectable body, or you would not have permitted so pernicious an opinion to be published to the world. To my mind that gloomy view of human life, so uttered in your Report, is calculated to do incalculable mischief, for it strikes at the very foundation of the Christian religion. And yet it is a singular fact that your Report should meet with such universal approbation from all the orthodox ministers in our land, while my poor, unfortunate letter—which is but a plea for the possibility of immortality—should be received by them with condemnation. Verily here is another instance wherein may be applied the simile of *the gnat and the camel*.

I know that many thinking minds, not illuminated by Christian faith, may have doubts of the future; but when those doubts are resolved into a belief that "death is indeed a sleep that knows no awakening," I do not believe that mankind will be made better or happier by publishing it to the world under the sanction of a great Commission.

For my own part, I believe that the poorest religion the world ever knew, if it acknowledged and taught the immortality of the soul, is better for the people than no

religion at all, or a disbelief in a future existence. Your Report will be read by thousands, and infidelity, sanctioned by such an eminent body of men, I am afraid will do more harm than a universal belief in the demonstrations of so called "Modern Spiritualism." But I leave that matter to the ministry. I am not the guardian of their folds. It may be that this is only the track of a very harmless "rodent," yet to my inexperienced eye it looks like the footprint of a dangerous wolf.

If the testimony given in the preceding pages of this little book is true, the immortality of the soul is proved by demonstrative evidence, and so far it strengthens the foundation of Christianity. If your feeble testimony, and the conclusions you endorse shall prevail, then every minister of our holy religion who teaches the lessons of spirit life contained in the Bible, is uttering a heresy against science, and promulgating an error.

You admit in your Report that "*there is an outlying region claimed by Spiritualists which you have not touched, and that you would gladly enter it.*" If this is true,—and I do not doubt it,—there is yet hope for you and those thoughtless minds that may be poisoned by the sentiments uttered in the peroration of your Report. You can enter if you will—as I have told you in a former chapter; only it should be with the desire of honest investigation, and with a sincere intention not only to search for the truth, but to recognize it when found. You may even go armed, if you so desire, with your hand mirror, printers' ink, and Caffray's paper, leaving your ("*asides*") at home; and the courtesy of every home séance in the country will doubtless be extended to you.

In the issue presented to the people through your Report, there are three questions involved:—

- 1st. Do the phenomena claimed by Spiritualists occur?
- 2d. Do those phenomena manifest intelligence?

3d. Are they evidence of spirit visitations from an unknown world?

So far as the issue involved in the first question is concerned, if human testimony can prove any physical fact, the existence of the phenomena is clearly established. To doubt the evidence of the multitude of witnesses who have seen and most graphically described them, is to doubt all human testimony. To set the wisdom of your Commission against that of all the learned investigators who have preceded you; to ask that your testimony as to what you did not see shall confute that of the hundreds of able scientists who have seen, and that your puny investigation shall outweigh theirs — would be the very sublimation of egotism; surely, gentlemen, your manifest modesty will not permit you to expect this.

As to the second question: From the positive testimony of so many competent, truthful men and women, who have witnessed unmistakable evidence of the intelligence of the phenomena, this fact must also be clearly proven to every candid mind. The number and character of the witnesses, their scientific attainments, the carefulness they exercised in their experimental researches, their eminent position in the scientific world, their number, and the fearlessness with which they avow their opinions, must give their testimony great weight with the candid, unbiased jurymen.

The existence of *intelligent* phenomena whose cause is unknown to science, is also clearly proven by the labored explanations, scientific essays and lectures that have been delivered upon it by the many learned physicists who have in vain tried to explain it; the most noted of which are those of the celebrated Dr. William B. Carpenter, V.P.R.S., etc., of the University of London, who, admitting the existence of the phenomena, attempts to account for it by what he names "Unconscious Cerebration;"

which, he says, "performs a large part in the production of the phenomena known as spiritualistic." See *Quarterly Review*, October, 1853.

Now, the somewhat ponderous term "*Unconscious Cerebration*" has an ominous sound to those who are uninformed on the subject of the action of the "*sensory ganglia*."

Perhaps a brief and unscientific explanation of what is meant by this high-sounding phrase may not be uninteresting to my readers.

All the motions of the body may be classified in two general classes, — the "*voluntary and involuntary*," or the *conscious and unconscious*. The voluntary motions are those that are performed by the physical organs in obedience to the direct commands of the *cerebrum*, or upper portion of the brain; as, when we wish it, this brain commands the tongue to speak, the hands to move, or the legs to walk. The involuntary motions are those that are performed without the direct command of the *cerebrum*; as, the beating of the heart, the motion of the lungs, or any of the movements of the internal organism whose functions are necessary to life and health.

Now, "consciousness is the basis of all strictly mental activity." We become conscious of the existence of an object, whose presence is manifested to us through the sense of sight alone, by the impression of that object being made upon the *retina* of the eye, which is a *ganglionic* expansion connected with the optic nerve. This is connected with the *sensorium* of the *cerebrum*, and by it the brain is sensible of, or takes cognizance of, the impressions made upon the retina. Yet it is certain that the *sensorium* does not always take notice of the objects presented to the eye; that is, we see, and are not conscious of it, because of a temporary inactivity of the *sensorium*. While walking along a crowded street, our

thoughts being preoccupied, we unconsciously turn to the right or left, to avoid persons or obstructions on the sidewalk, and we seem to do this automatically; this shows that the cerebrum has "an *automatic* activity of its own."

Somewhere in that great storehouse of human recollection, the brain, are kept the records of memory; and that the clerk who has charge of them acts automatically is proven by the fact that often memory is searching for a name or a term, and cannot find it. "We think, and think," and can almost recollect what we desire to, but like a phantom it eludes our grasp. We turn to some other occupation that apparently diverts our thoughts. Meanwhile that busy little clerk in the office of memory keeps on searching for what we wished to find a few moments ago. We are all unconscious of his researches, until, at last, he finds it, and suddenly the missing name or evasive term—to use a common expression—"pops into our mind," and our memory is clear.

This familiar phenomenon shows that there must be two actions of the *cerebrum*,—a voluntary—when it issues its positive commands to the members of the body and they obey; an involuntary, or automatic action—when it keeps on searching the records of memory when not directed to do so by any consciousness on our part.

The hand of the skilful artisan was at first directed by the *cerebrum* how to perform its task. After long experience the hand seems to have learned its duty so well that it moves automatically, while the mind of its possessor is busily engaged with thoughts far away from his daily routine. Yet the hand could not perform its task unless directed by the brain in a manner which seems to be automatic, and without our consciousness.

Now, to apply these dreary facts to the method of accounting for much of the so-called spiritistic phenomena by "unconscious cerebration" as it is explained by Dr. Carpenter:—

All the facts, incidents, and associations of our lives are kept in the records of memory. All our loves, hatreds, and emotions are written there in characters that are never effaced. We sit with a medium and ask certain questions; they are answered—to us in a mysterious manner. We are told things that we had apparently entirely forgotten; the answer revives our recollection, and we know that they are true. The clerk of our memory office gives the records to the medium, who reads therefrom. This is “*unconscious cerebration*,” as explained by Dr. Carpenter, and in speaking of these answers to questions, he says:—

“Such cases afford typical examples of ‘*unconscious cerebration*,’ for in several of them it was capable of being distinctly shown that the answers, although contrary to the belief of the questioners at the time, were true to facts of which they had been formerly cognizant, but which had vanished from their recollection,—the *residua* of these forgotten impressions giving rise to cerebral changes, which prompted responses without any consciousness on the part of the agents of the latent springs of action.”

Now Dr. Carpenter is an eminent scientist,—in fact, a giant in his profession,—but observe how a little stone thrown by Professor Crookes lays him low in his armor of scientific mail.

On page 96 of his *Researches* Professor Crookes says:—

“A lady was writing automatically by means of a planchette. I was trying to devise a means of proving that what she wrote was not due to ‘*unconscious cerebration*.’ The planchette, as it always does, insisted that although it was moved by the hand and arm of the lady, the *intelligence* was that of an invisible being who was playing with her brain as on a musical instrument, and thus moving her muscles. I therefore said to this intelligence, ‘Can you see to read this newspaper?’—putting my finger on a copy of the *Times*, which was on the table behind me, but *without* looking at it. ‘Yes,’ was the reply of the planchette.

'Well,' I said, 'if you can see that, write the word which is now covered by my finger, and I will believe you.' The planchette commenced to move. Slowly and with great difficulty the word 'however' was written. I turned round and saw that the word 'however' was covered by the tip of my finger.

"I had purposely avoided looking at the newspaper when I tried this experiment, and it was impossible for the lady, had she tried, to have seen any printed words, for she was sitting at the table, and the paper was on another table behind, my body intervening."

It must be evident to all that if there existed such a phenomenon as "unconscious cerebration," it could not happen where the fact related was at the time unknown either to the medium, the sitter, or to any other living being on this earth.

High-sounding, ponderous, scientific terms have a paralyzing effect on the average mind, and are often used in argument with terrific effect. Even the most common occurrences of life, when related in the phraseology of science, assume a vast importance compared with the same fact related in the common phraseology of everyday use. For instance, science informs us that *chloride of sodium* is an *antiseptic*; the same fact is enunciated in the common expression that *salt preserves meat*;—yet how different does that commonplace phenomenon look, when clothed in the regal robes of science, from what it does dressed in the plebeian attire of unadorned truth.

The argument of Dr. Carpenter shows conclusively that he admits the existence of intelligent phenomena, and endeavors to explain them by the known laws of physiology.

Of the fact that these phenomena are of frequent occurrence, there can be no doubt in the minds of those who will examine the matter even superficially; while scientific researches only the more and more confirm it. I cannot disbelieve the testimony of the host of witnesses who

have testified in its behalf; neither can I doubt the evidence of my own senses, if I would. But the question, "Is it evidence of spirit visitations from an unknown world?" — *Ay, there's the rub.* I have as yet seen nothing to satisfy me conclusively that such is the fact. Here there is no *positive* testimony, only inferential or presumptive. It certainly is evidence; but whether it is conclusive, is as it may strike the mind of my readers.

There is nothing either against the established facts, or the logic of science, in the theory that outside of this world there is a vast universe of both matter and life, "and that immortality of life is possible without a break of continuity." Even that great disbeliever in Spiritualism, Weiss, asserts: —

"That nothing can save the soul from collapsing into the blind forces of the world but the preservation of its identity; and that cannot be preserved without a frame to hold it, a system of organs by which it can express spiritual functions."

If this proposition is true, — and it certainly seems to be so, — then whence comes the spiritual body that holds the spirit soul, that performs its functions, and obeys its commands, as our physical organs obey the commands of our minds? Of what is that body composed, if not of etherialized matter? Is not the presence of matter necessary to any conception of a future world? A spirit life, with a spirit body, inhabiting a world of spirit into which no matter enters, is to me a conception that we are indeed of "such things as dreams are made on" — an impalpable nothing — the baseless fabric of a vision.

There may be a body composed of matter so ethereal as to escape human vision; yet the investigation of science may assuredly prove its existence.

On the end of a blade of grass just dipped into a stag-

nant ptol by the summer's wind is a little drop of water, and it is made of the mist that but yesterday was floating in the sunbeam. We lay it upon the plate of a microscope, and behold, the transparent drop is transformed into a world in miniature, teeming with life in which thousands of perfectly formed animated beings roam in unconfined freedom, live and love, propagate their species and die, and seem to enjoy their little lives that span but an hour or a day with as much relish as the larger classes of animals. Yet that life was invisible to us, and unknown even to science, until invention found the *sesame* that opened to our gaze the wonders and beauties of an unseen world. What the microscope was to science, "spiritual manifestations" may yet be to the searcher after the truths of that "outlying region into which you would gladly enter."

There certainly is nothing in all the innumerable phenomena of nature that denies immortality to the human soul. There is nothing in the law of evolution that denies it, but rather it proclaims it as a truth. The Creator in the instinctive longings of our being seems to have promised it to us.

"Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
 This longing after immortality?
 Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
 Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
 Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
 'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
 And intimates Eternity to man.
 Eternity! Thou pleasing, dreadful thought!"

When Cato here recognized the truths of Plato's philosophy, he but acknowledged the promise of a future life which God gave to man by the instincts he implanted in the very laws of his being.

If it is true that we have a future life, where is the theatre of its action? We know that the road thither is through the bitter pangs of death; but who has told us with certainty that the feet of those who have trodden its mysterious paths may not return to us again? Who can positively say that it is impossible, from any knowledge that science or religion has given us?

In all controverted questions of facts in our courts the rule of law is, "that the best evidence of which the case in its nature is susceptible must be produced." This evidence the Spiritualists have presented to the world; *i.e.*, they have clearly demonstrated the presence in our midst of an unseen, intelligent force. That force can, and does, relate to us what it is, from whence it comes, and whither it goeth. That force is a law of God. That force tells us that it is the spirits of those who once inhabited this earth; and if it is not true, then does a law of nature utter a falsehood to man. No such monstrous thing ever did occur. In our conceptions of the Creator such suppositions would be inconsistent with all His attributes, — a wicked blasphemy of His holy name.

The husbandman, when he sows his seed, needs not the bow of God's covenant to assure him that the harvest will come. All the instincts of animated nature are but the promises of the Creator, and they are never false. The swallow born under the eaves of a barn in the north is told by his instincts that winter will come to us here, but that far south is a sunny clime, and when autumn approaches, it spreads its inexperienced wings and journeys thither, only to find the promise of its Creator fulfilled. The insect weaves its cocoon, inspired by the promise of its instincts — one of nature's laws — that the genial sun of a future spring will warm its larvæ into a coming life; and so, throughout all creation's vast domain, the laws of nature are the very embodiment of absolute truth.

And yet if spirit manifestations are not true, then do we have a single, isolated instance of a law of nature repudiating its promises, and uttering a falsehood to those who are earnestly seeking after truth.

No, it cannot be! Once clearly establish the existence of a phenomenon, and the truths it tells us are incontrovertible. When the law of gravity was discovered, so inflexible was the verity it uttered, that Leverrier, a poor student, seated in his study, formulated those truths into a mathematical calculation, and discovered the unseen planet Neptune, whose pathway is nearly three thousand millions of miles from the center of our system. The truths of nature's laws told him that it was eighty-five times larger than our earth, and that it revolved around the sun in about one hundred and sixty-five solar years. There, alone in his study, without the aid of a telescope, or any other astronomical devices, in the presence alone of nature's laws, and relying on the truths they told him, he discovered this stupendous orb in its distant, lonely pathway; and relying upon nature's word, he informed Dr. Galle of Berlin of its existence, and directed him to its exact position in the heavens; and on the 23d of September, 1846, the telescope of this astronomer verified the truth thus related to the world, and the planet was seen just where the laws of gravity and motion had said it would be. So it is with all natural phenomena; the stories they tell are always true, and to those who are competent to interpret their language, or understand their mysterious articulation, they never utter a falsehood.

If the phenomena claimed by Spiritualists exist, if the witnesses who testify to their existence are reliable, and if these phenomena inform us of their spiritual origin, they tell the truth because God's laws cannot lie. But it may be said that these manifestations are like the *lying spirits* that persuaded Ahab to go up to Ramoth.

gilead to battle. Not so! The truths they tell us that are incontrovertible are the existence of unseen, intelligent, living forces — which presupposes a world where those intelligences live — and a body or members by which they manifest their actual existence; — just as the presence of a human being or an animal presupposes that there is a world of solid earth fitted for their life and enjoyment, or that of a fish, that there is a fluid element in which it lives, while the habits or idiosyncrasies of the animal are governed by the laws of its individual existence.

What “spirit manifestations” tell us that is incontrovertible is “*that there is an unknown and invisible world, inhabited by intelligent, invisible beings, who can and do communicate with us.*”

Whether these communications are true, and fully understood by us, or whether, from our want of knowledge of the necessary conditions required, they are imperfect, untrue, or misunderstood, are questions for future investigation. All that Spiritualists ask of the world is a fair, candid, and earnest examination of their Christian faith. All they demand of you, Gentlemen of the Seybert Commission, is that you comply with the bequest of Henry Seybert, and “*make a thorough and impartial investigation of Modern Spiritualism*”; that you keep your wit, sneers, and sarcasm for a more fitting occasion, and that you perform the duties and execute the trust you have assumed in a manner worthy of Christian gentlemen — “and they will be content.” But do not, I beg of you, think that your puny efforts at investigation have annihilated the cherished religious faith of twenty millions of intelligent people. The votaries of Spiritualism know what they have seen and heard that verifies their creed, as well as you know what you saw *during* your wonderful experience. They are as compe-

tent to judge as you are, of physical facts. They ask no favors at your hands, but simple, even-handed justice and truth; and from the character of your "Preliminary Report" they have no doubt that it will give you pleasure to accede to their demands.

In your future investigations, undoubtedly you will be liable to the frauds of petty showmen, and to become the butt or victim of practical jokers, as before.

"Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

See the book I recommended to you, Matt. x. 16.

And I beg of you not to forget that —

"Great is truth, and mighty above all things."

1 vol. of same book, 1 Esdras iv. 41.

Remember that the great Francis Bacon once said, "No pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage-ground of truth."

And should the money bequeathed by Henry Seybert for the purpose of an impartial investigation "hold out." and your wisdom deem it worth while to continue your able and laborious researches, remember the injunction of John the evangelist: —

"Brethren, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

This warning of the great disciple of course presupposes that there are genuine spirits and prophets. If there was no genuine coin in the world, there could be no false or counterfeit. Therefore, as business men, as well as great investigators, I warn you against the spurious currency now in circulation, so much of which you seem to have received as genuine in your former labors for the public good. Remember, it is not your duty to make for public inspection a collection of base-metal medals and

bad pennies, but the gold and silver coin of truth and honesty. Do not let your prejudices override your judgment and consciences. There is a world of truth in the lines of Kane O'Hara, in his play of *Midas*: —

“Remember, when the judgment is weak, the prejudice is strong.”

And of course you may have more to contend with, for this reason, than those who have investigated before you; yet if you are only honest, the great jury of the world will be charitable toward you; knowing the divine decree, “That where but little is given but little is required in return.”

POSTSCRIPTUM.

“ But this informs me I shall never die.
 The soul secured in her existence, smiles
 At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
 The stars shall fade away, and nature sink in years,
 But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
 Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
 The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.”

ADDISON.

“ I am too deeply imbued with the belief that we are such stuff as dreams are made on, to be unwilling to accept a few more shadows in my sleep.”

Seybert Commission Report.

BEFORE bidding good-by to my reader, I desire to once more call attention to the pernicious sentiment endorsed by the Seybert Commissioners, and sent broadcast over the world on its baneful mission—thoughtlessly I hope—approved of by the orthodox ministry of the country, and applauded by a number of religious publications. Compare it with the sentiment of Addison, so full of hope and consolation to dying man, and then for a moment stop and reflect.

Spiritualism, which professes to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, is scoffed at, and derided from press and pulpit, while doubt and infidelity are heralded to the world with smiles and approval. “ *Oh, consistency, thou art indeed a jewel!* ”

A few months ago I was seated in a railroad car at a depot in New York City, waiting for the train to start on its tireless journey. Presently two quite aged ladies entered the car and took seats opposite me, across the aisle. Soon two young ladies and a young gentleman entered, and going to the old ladies, the latter handed each of

them a ticket, then stood and talked a few moments, when the warning bell rang. The young people one after another stooped and kissed them affectionately, saying, "Good-by, mother! good-by, aunt!" and turned to leave the train, when one of the old ladies, in a voice tremulous with emotion, said, "Good-by, children! I shall see you in my dreams, if we never meet again"; and as the car door closed, and the train moved on, she bowed her head on her hands, and wept and sobbed as if her heart would break.

I sat looking at them for some moments, and I am almost ashamed to own it, but I was constrained to wipe a tear from my own eyes as I turned away to conceal my weakness from observation. I saw that their tickets had a number of coupons attached to them, indicating that they had a long journey before them. Then imagination commenced to tell me their story.

The two old ladies resembled each other so much that I was confident they were sisters. The aged mother had come from the far West, accompanied by her sister, to visit her children in New York City. She had probably seen them for the last time on earth, unless, as she remarked, she should see them in her dreams. Then the favorite quotation of the Chairman of the Seybert Commission came into my mind, —

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

"Yes! Yes!!" I thought, "poor old lady, you will only see your children again in dreams"; and I pitied her from the bottom of my heart, as I heard her sobs of anguish. The sister tried to whisper words of comfort and consolation in her unheeding ear, when, suddenly, she *raised her head* and a radiant smile illumined her wrinkled

cheek wet with tears, and, turning towards her companion, she said, in a voice that trembled no longer:—

“Well, Sarah, I shall meet all of my children in heaven pretty soon, and then there will be no more parting.”

The look of Christian confidence, faith, hope, and joy on her aged face went to my own doubting heart like a beam of sunlight through a cloudy sky; while her words rebuked my thoughts into submissive silence; almost to conviction. Life must be something more than a dream! I said to myself; such faith and hope speak only in tones of prophecy that do not err.

Long and well did I ponder over the incident; and I thought, “My dear old lady, how gladly would I exchange all my little knowledge of science and nature’s laws for your unbounded Christian faith; for that belief that robs death of its terrors, and converts the dreaded grave into an open portal to a future life.” Then the memory of my dear old mother came before me, and I thought of a long-forgotten prayer she taught me, when at her knee she tried to direct my wayward mind towards the heaven of her Christian hope and faith.

Then I thought: Can it be? Is life only a dream to be rounded up with a sleep; a sleep that knows no awakening? Alas, why does the Creator give to man defective reasoning powers, and inconclusive evidence of a future life? For conclusive evidence would remove all doubt, and the sentence recorded by the Chairman of the Seybert Commission would never have been uttered; the immortal pen of Shakespeare would never have written that oft-repeated thought of disbelief and infidelity. But so it is; faith to many minds is a synonym with belief, and belief to them comes only from evidence. A thinking man cannot resist a doubt forced upon him by inconclusive proof, neither can he disbelieve a demonstrated

truth. Faith may be abundantly sufficient with some mental organizations, while it will leave others in doubt and uncertainty. It is useless to talk about accepting or rejecting any particular belief. We can neither accept nor reject on our volition alone. We are often convinced against our desires, and as often we are not convinced when we sincerely wish to be.

The Seybert Commissioners are not to blame for the disbelief in immortality they endorse ; still do I think that that sentiment published to the world, with the weight of their position attached to it, should not be approved and applauded by a Christian ministry. Is it not just possible that the bitter pill of infidelity was so sugar-coated with the sneers at Spiritualism that it was swallowed unconsciously? The outside surface was sweet even if the kernel was bitter. How many unconscious denizens of the water have been caught by the pleasing appearance of a worm that concealed a barbed hook beneath its alluring form !

I have earnestly wished to believe in the immortality of the soul, and have tried to believe it ; and long before I ever heard of Modern Spiritualism I had seen evidence to my mind almost conclusive thereof. Yet I doubted.

My father was a Christian man somewhat of the Puritan character. He even took pride in the fact that his ancestor was " John of Taunton," or, as he was oftener called, " John the Puritan," who came over with the " Mayflower." He was a learned man for his day, yet a firm believer in that horrible phantasm of the human brain, a personal demon who was always contending with the Creator for the souls of men. He never doubted the existence of " the burning lake," and the final destiny of the sinner and unbeliever. He died in the full possession of his senses. An hour before his death I had assisted him in performing a surgical operation. When stricken

down, yet while fully conscious of his approaching death, he reached out his hand to me, and told me to "count his pulse." With trembling fingers I touched the beating pendulum of life, and told him the result. As calmly as he ever uttered a sentence, he said, "My son, the end is near at hand." My mother, who was standing by his bedside, and who desired that he should leave to his wayward boy some evidence of the fruition of a Christian life, amid her tears said, "Doctor, what of the future life?" A thoughtful expression came over his countenance. Then he calmly replied: "Sarah, I don't know! I have always been a praying man, and I hope it will be well with me hereafter!" In a few moments he died.

Oh! what an impression his last utterance made upon me! That my good, noble, Christian father should have any doubts of his future left me with but little hope.

A few months after, my sister died. She was a mature woman, — a victim of the remorseless consumption, — yet a fragile girl with an exceedingly acute nervous organization. I stood by her bedside a few moments before her death; when, suddenly opening her eyes, she looked upwards with a gaze of ecstasy, and clapping her feeble hands, she exclaimed, in a voice much more distinct than she had uttered for many days: "Oh, mother! see, see! There is father, and Mary, and Almira come to welcome me home! Oh, I am so happy! so happy!" And her lips were silent forever.

Well do I remember the words of consolation uttered by the venerable minister who preached her funeral sermon, to the weeping mourners who sat around her coffin. He spoke of her pure Christian life; and as an assurance of her future happiness, he said that the spirits of her father and sisters were hovering around her dying bed, waiting to accompany her to her heavenly home.

Often from Christian ministers, both in public and pri-

vate obsequies, have I heard the same utterances, the same assurances of spirit visitations to the bedside of the dying. And for long years after, when doubt would throw its darkening mantle over the convictions of my youth, I would turn for comfort alone to these evidences of a future life. When my little knowledge of nature's laws has suggested to me the possibility that "we are such stuff as dreams are made on, that our little life is rounded with a sleep," the scene of my sister's dying-bed has confronted my philosophy, and done more to drive away doubt and uncertainty from my mind than all the polemic discourses on *faith* I ever heard from the persuasive lips of the ministry.

And yet the Seybert Commissioners say this is all nothing but the insane imagining of the human mind, "the baseless fabric of a vision," or the fiction of a diseased and dying brain. If they are wrong, and if spirit life and visitations are nature's truths, may God forgive them for the inadvertent injury they have done in thus sowing the tares of doubt over the fair fields of hope and faith.

I do not believe there is one reader of this page who has not frequently heard it said in ministerial pulpits, that the dying Christian does sometimes see angel visitants from another world hovering around the bed of death. No minister of *the Gospel* who has any regard for either the faith of the members of his church, the truth, or his salary would dare to deny it; and yet they deny the fact of spirit manifestations with a zeal that seems to prefer infidel sentiments to demonstrative evidence of a fact they all profess to believe. "But why did not spiritual visitants hover around the bed of the dying father as well as the sister?" asks an honest inquirer.

I do not know, any more than I know why my father *could not* sing a tune, while my sister was an accom-

plished musician. She could perceive beauties in a concord of sweet sounds that were beyond the reach of his mental perception. Yet she did not hear the harmony of song or the melody of music with her physical organism alone, but with an internal faculty of the senses, an innate capacity of the soul my stern Puritan father did not possess. Their nervous organizations were as differently affected by their surroundings, as the wind when it drives the surf upon the sounding shore, or moves the strings of an Æolian harp in symphony. It requires the force of a storm to move the waves, while the harp strings vibrate at the touch of a summer's zephyr. So with the mental organizations of mankind; some are cool and courageous in actual danger, others sensitive and fearful even in their hours of safety. Some are affected by the emotions of joy or grief, while others under apparently the same circumstances are stolidly indifferent. And when we can and do know all the secrets of that force called human intellect, then shall we know why spirit visitants may be seen by some while they are invisible to others, why spirit fingers may vibrate the strings of the harp while they could not move the waves of the ocean.

Let the alleged facts of Spiritualism once be fully established, and the dark cloud of infidelity now overshadowing the earth would be dissipated as the mist of the morning vanishes before the light of the sun. It would open heaven to the sight of the skeptic, and teach him the paths that lead to its infinite happiness. What the beacon lights along the shores of a fitful sea are to the storm-beaten mariner, its glorious rays would be to life's voyagers, directing them to a haven of blissful existence beyond the dreaded portals of the tomb.

If the world shall ever become convinced that the theory of Spiritualism is true, mankind must and will be made better and happier therefor. It is the doubt of

a future life that points the blade of the assassin and nerves the arm of the murderer; that silences the appeals of conscience, and gives immunity to crime;— while the certainty of a hereafter, with a knowledge of its laws and conditions, would have a restraining power over the acts of men, infinitely greater than criminal codes or prison bars.

And then what comfort would it give to the silent mourners in every home and family circle, who, by its cheering influence, would exchange the uncertainty of hope and faith for the certainty of positive demonstration; who would know that their dead are not lost to them, but only wait on the “other shore” to welcome them with loving embrace.

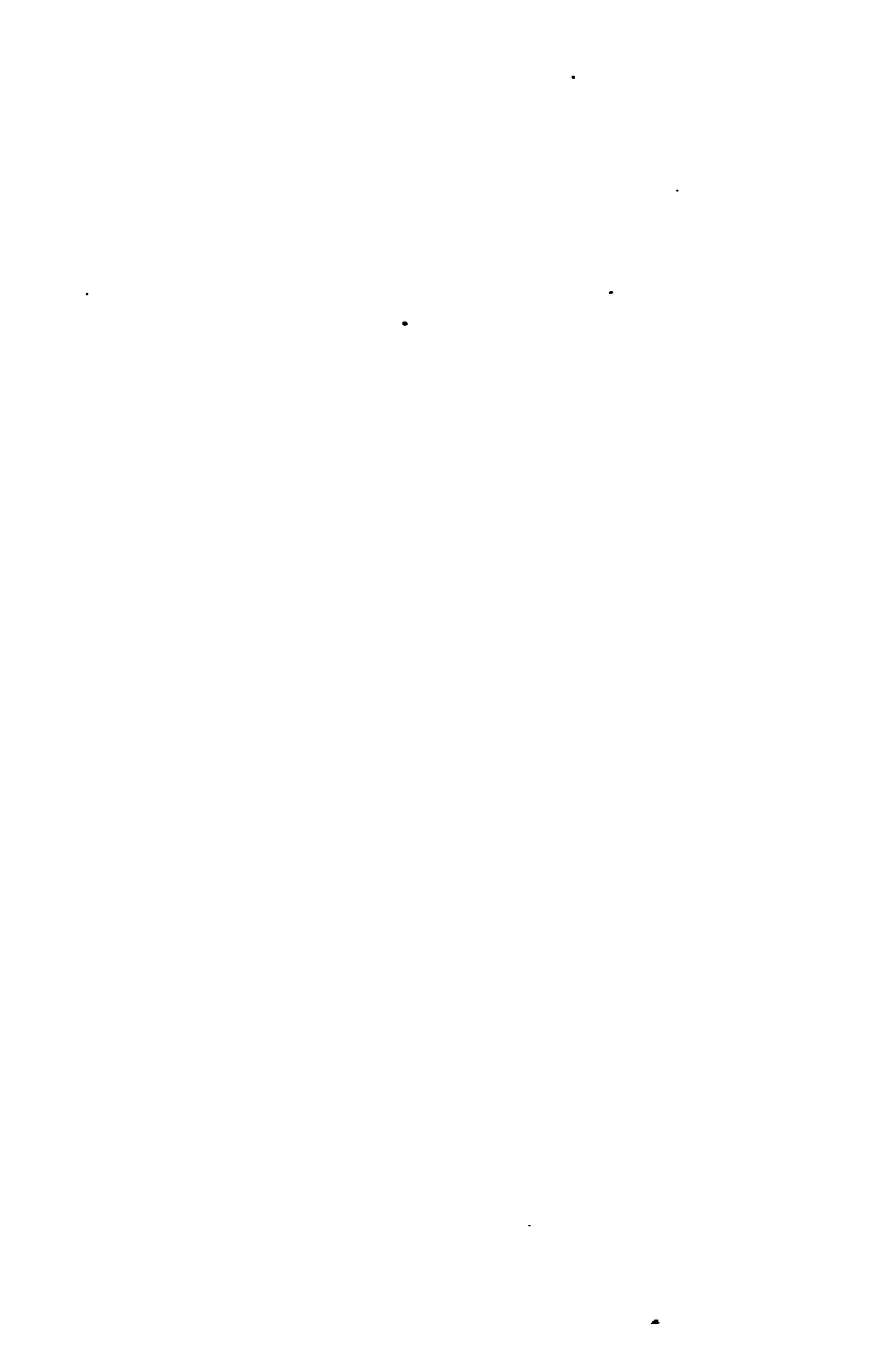
In conclusion, let me not be misunderstood. I am not a Spiritualist. I have not yet seen that which convinces me beyond a doubt that the claims of Spiritualism are true. I know that there is around us an unseen intelligent force that purports to be a visitation from spirit life. Science has not explained it. Savants have offered no theory to the world that can account for all its phenomena. But if there is a spirit world, the theory and philosophy of Spiritualism present the most rational solution to the mystery.

I commenced to write this review the 10th of September last. It is now October 31st. During this time I have been actively engaged in the practice of my profession, and have had to write it during the few leisure moments left me after the regular labors of my office were ended. I hope the haste with which its pages were written will be sufficient excuse for its many imperfections, and that my readers will believe that my intentions in writing it were good, not evil; and that its mission may be to direct investigation towards the so-called phenomena of Spiritualism, and candid thought toward its BEAUTIFUL PHILOSOPHY.

A. B. RICHMOND.

Oct. 31, 1887.







1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

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